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Henrietta Gally Knight



# POEMS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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BY

HENRY GALLY KNIGHT, ESQ.

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PREFACE

TO

THE EASTERN SKETCHES.

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THE plan of the following work was first conceived and partly executed in the countries which it attempts to illustrate. The stories are not merely fables; they are intended to be portraits, faithfully representing the features of the respective countries in which the scene of each poem is laid—authorities exist in nature for whatever is introduced.

The Muse is, perhaps, never so much at her ease as when she sports in the regions of pure fancy; but, in touching upon the countries of the East, truth and poetry may still be united. Civilization and refinement destroy those strong features, those projecting points, that variety of character, which

create a strong interest when described. But civilization has effected no changes in the Turkish empire. Its actual state is one in which romantic adventures are daily occurrences ; very similar to that of Europe under the feudal system ; with great advantages on the side of climate and costume.

Those who have wandered over Turkey, find their subsequent travels in Christendom comparatively flat and insipid. The eastern traveller is kept in a state of constant excitement, by the entire novelty and variety of the scene, the total difference of habits, dress, and religion ; the manner of his progress more resembling a campaign than a journey, the difficulties he has to encounter, and the dangers to which he must occasionally be exposed ;—he meets with a picture at every well—he hears of the robbers that swarm in the neighbouring mountains—the rival pashas are waging war with each other in the countries through which he passes—a massacre takes place in the town where he resides—he sees the victims driven to

execution, and their wives led into bondage;—these circumstances, however revolting to his feelings as a man, are favourable to his views as a poet. In addition to this, “the sun, the air, the common skies” of southern climates present sources of admiration unknown to a native of the north. He finds himself, for the first time, in countries where the pastoral poetry of the ancients is true to nature; where shepherds and shepherdesses absolutely *may* have passed their lives in the open air, and wanted no shelter but that of grottos and trees.

The foregoing observations apply generally to that empire which was the scene of our excursion\*. It may, perhaps, be allowed me to say a few words in regard to the three provinces, to each of which one of the following poems is dedicated, not so much with the object of telling my readers anything new, as of presenting them with a sort of map of

\* The Author, in company with the Hon. Frederick North, and J. N. Fazakerley, Esq., visited the most interesting provinces of the Turkish Empire in 1810-11.

the lands they are about to enter, and saving them the trouble of necessary recurrence to other volumes.

I shall take the provinces in the order in which they occur in the poems. Of Syria it will be remembered that it was always considered by the Greeks and Romans as amongst the most fertile of their possessions, scarcely inferior to Egypt. It consists of three stripes of land of different qualities: one of these, extending along the coast of the Mediterranean, is a warm and humid plain, of great natural fertility; the next is a mountainous and rugged region, but far more healthy; the third, which lies behind the mountains to the east, is exposed to great heats, and of a dry quality, but in most parts is capable of being made productive by a system of irrigation.

Modern Syria, called by its present possessors *el Cham*, or “the country of the left,”\* compre-

\* Syria lay on the *left* of its Arab conquerors as they approached it from the deserts. For a similar reason, *Jericho*

hends, besides Ancient Syria, Phœnicia and Palestine. This country is inhabited by many perfectly distinct tribes, the fragments and relics of various nations; by the Greeks, the conquered nation, who are still numerous in the cities; by the sedentary Arabs, the cultivators of the soil; by the Turks, who have the military occupation of the country; by wandering tribes of Arabs, Turcomans, and Courds; by the Druzes, the free mountaineers, who inhabit Lebanon; besides which are to be numbered the Maronites, who also inhabit Lebanon, and are Christians; the Ansaria and Mutouali, small tribes who occupy other mountains, and are Mahometan sectaries. Perhaps no country of equal extent has so diversified a population. The distant and feeble authority of the Porte is little more than acknowledged in Syria. The pashas, who are its governors, are, generally, military adventurers, self-raised to independence, is said to be *beyond* Jordan, by Moses—he speaks of it with reference to his own route.

but accept from the Porte the formal nomination, which cannot be refused. From the looseness of the supreme authority, the number of the governors, and the struggles which they are continually making to gain, or extend their power, and from the additional vexation of the repeated descents or incursions of plundering hordes, Syria is a country seldom at rest.

In consequence, any advanced degree of agriculture or commerce is confined to the immediate neighbourhood of the cities, and to the mountains. The fertile and extensive plains are strewed with ruins, and only so far cultivated as to supply the absolute wants of the scanty inhabitants, who collect their harvest armed, and in fear ; and hide the corn as soon as it is reaped. The wide tracts of country that have relapsed into a state of nature, give room for the wandering pastoral tribes.

Such is the actual state of a province which had prospered under the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantine empire, and the Kaliphate ; of which



the fertility and various temperature\* allows it to produce the fruits of almost every climate, which had once monopolized the commerce of the world, and on the decoration of which the most numerous and costly efforts of architecture had been bestowed.

I must be allowed to enter more into detail respecting that part of Syria which is the immediate scene of the first poem. Balbec, gradually reduced since the Mahomedan conquest to an inconsiderable town, is become, with the adjacent plain, an hereditary possession in the family of an Arabian chief. The plain is bounded by the heights of Libanus on the one side, and on the other by those of Anti-Libanus. The city stands at the foot of the latter. Nothing can be more desolate than the present appearance of this once

\* In Syria you may live in whatever climate you prefer; the mountains are always at hand, and, by ascending or descending from one of their convents or villages to the other, you may exactly graduate your residence according to your fancy.

magnificent city ; a terrible earthquake, which occurred in 1759, completed what bad government and constant disturbances had long been assisting to produce ; a few scattered houses, amidst heaps of extensive ruin, are all that retain inhabitants. The splendid remains of the celebrated Temple of the Sun, rising triumphantly over those of the modern town, still attest the superiority of ancient workmanship. The Arab Sheik, the lord of this scene of desolation, resides in a fragment of a palace which is nodding to its fall ; but consoles himself with a garden, a fountain, and a pavilion, where he dispenses law and holds his court. A fine grove of trees, which grows at the entrance of the town, and a little river which divides it, are proofs of the natural advantages of the situation. The mountains and peaks which rise all around, (many of them covered with snow till late in the summer,) whilst they afford sublime prospects on every side, supply the sources of abundance to the lands beneath. The streams that descend from

these neighbouring heights were once made to irrigate the whole plain. This favourable circumstance, together with a share of the commerce of the east, gave to Balbec its former wealth, pre-eminence, and population.

In the adjacent heights of Libanus dwell the Druzes; the rugged district they inhabit offers a curious contrast to the rich, uncultivated, and deserted plains. On Libanus, the improved state of every accessible spot, the groves of mulberries and olives, the vineyards, the thickly-scattered villages and convents, at once proclaim comparative freedom. The Druzes are secured by their mountains from the pressure of the Turkish yoke, and the effects of this immunity are visible over the whole face of their territory. The aborigines of this singular people are said to have been the followers of Hakem-B'imr-ellagh, Kaliph of Egypt, whose mad pretensions to divinity were acknowledged by some, but whose cruelties caused him to be massacred by his people in the beginning of the

eleventh century. His principles, however, were propagated in Egypt and Syria; but the proselytes were persecuted, and taking refuge in the fastnesses of Libanus, became an independent body, and were soon known by the name they now bear. Notwithstanding the peculiarity of their own religious notions, they are exceedingly tolerant, inso-much that Libanus swarms with convents of various Christian sects. Libanus is the sanctuary of the Turkish empire, and all who take refuge there are kindly received. It is therefore an heterogeneous community; but common interest induces them to act together. The Druzes are warlike, and are constantly lending military assistance to their allies of the moment. In complexion they are fair. The women are less rigidly veiled than in other parts of Turkey; they wear on their heads an extraordinary high peak\*, or hollow cone of metal, over which

\* Bruce found the same peculiarity of head-dress in Abyssinia, where the horn is the badge of victory, and worn by officers of high rank. In Abyssinia it is made of sil-

the veil is thrown, and descends half way down their persons.

Libanus is not a single mountain, but a long chain; the altitude of the most elevated point is supposed nearly to equal that of the Pyrenees. Fine specimens of the celebrated cedars are now only to be seen at a single spot; the great havoc in these groves was made during the early ages of Christianity, when the Holy Land was so universally adorned with churches, of which the roofs were usually cedar. The tree itself, however, is not uncommon, but is never suffered to attain any great size, being cut down for use whilst it is young.

ver, and fastened to a broad fillet, which is tied round the head. Bruce apprehends that this custom, like many other of the Abyssinian usages, is taken from the Hebrews, and the several allusions made to it in Scripture, he imagines to arise from this practice. Thus, in Samuel, "Mine horn is exalted in the Lord;" and in Job, "I have defiled my horn in the dust." May not the ornament of the head-dress of the Druzic women be derived from the same source?

I cannot leave Syria without speaking of Damascus, the most delightful city of the Turkish empire, which still retains a degree of commerce and of consequence, and where the oriental character and oriental manners are seen to peculiar advantage. This city is situated \* on the edge of the desert, and at the foot of barren mountains, which screen it from the north and the west. The soil round Damascus is gravelly and poor, but, assisted by irrigation, is found to be proper for fruit trees. Three rivulets, which descend from the mountains, water this district. In consequence, the whole territory is cultivated as a garden, and the result is a succession of groves and verdure, extending on all sides for miles, and refreshed by running streams. Seen from the barren heights at

\* The desert, it is supposed, was formerly much more distant from Damascus. The desert appears to have encroached, and to be annually encroaching on the whole eastern side of Syria. Depopulation and diminished cultivation entail there the same fatal consequences as in Egypt.

its back, Damascus appears to stand on a green island in the midst of a desert. Every part of the city is visited by the waters ; here and there they are made to rise as fountains. The best coffee-houses consist of pavilions, placed in the midst of gardens, where abound running streams, and roses, and nightingales in cages. The most wealthy of the inhabitants have villas about a mile from the city, surrounded with kiosks, groves, and fountains. Even the poorer inhabitants derive advantage from the supply of snow, which annually accumulates on the adjacent heights, and enables cooled water to be sold about the streets for a trifle. The exterior of the houses is universally plain, and even mean ; but often, when you emerge from the narrow passage into which the little street-door opens, you find yourself in the midst of marble courts, lofty halls, with gilt and fretted ceilings, fountains, orange-trees, and the whole catalogue of oriental luxuries. You see in Damascus how just a description of manners and customs is to be found in

the Arabian Nights. The insulated situation, and peculiar features of this highly-favoured spot, give it an air of enchantment.

Damascus is one of the holy cities of Turkey—one of the gates of Mecca. The great caravan annually sets out from Damascus, and arrives at Mecca in about seventy days. This caravan is, at the same time, the principal source of the city's wealth. All the pilgrims trade more or less; they come from all parts of Turkey, and even from Persia; at Mecca they meet with others from various countries of Africa, and from India, with whom they barter commodities. Damascus is the centre of this traffic, and thus still enjoys a portion of that commerce which has always conferred opulence wherever it has been fixed.

It must be confessed that the inhabitants of Damascus, proud of their city, and revelling in their wealth and their gardens, are disposed to be luxurious and indolent; but some allowance must be made them in consideration of the temptations by



which they are surrounded ; temptations which are almost irresistible in a climate where to sit under trees by a fountain, and watch the smoke as it curls out of one's pipe, is a sufficient, and satisfactory, employment both for body and mind.

The Syrians are, generally speaking, a handsome race ; of a tall, active make, commanding features, large dark eyes, arching eyebrows, and an olive complexion. The form of their turban is peculiar. It is much larger, and more raised in front than the Turkish turban, and more becoming.

From Syria the order of the stories carries me to Greece, which it is painful to enumerate as a Turkish province \*—that Greece where enthusiasm is reason, where the classic traveller finds himself in a land of acquaintance and friends, and blends the recollection of his own happiest days with the pleasure he derives from the first sight of those celebrated scenes. Not a peak but has a name with which he became acquainted when a boy—not

\* Written in 1819.

a plain but was the scene of a battle which, perhaps for the first time, warmed his heart—not a brook but has been sung in the poetry which was the admiration of his youth. It is difficult for those who have not been in the country to conceive the degree to which the scenery of Greece affects the mind.

The Greek nation, as it now exists, may be divided into three principal descriptions—the Greeks of the capital, the Greeks of the provinces, and those of the islands. The Greeks of the capital justly value themselves for their superior acquirements and an infinitely purer dialect—but they more highly prize the opening which is offered them to a part in public affairs. The first dragoman or interpreter to the Porte, through whose medium all negotiations and conferences are carried on with the representatives of European powers, is always a Greek. According to stipulations made at the conquest, the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia are always administered by Greek governors. These charges, and minor offices dependent upon

the first, admit the Greeks of the capital to the dangerous distinction of politics, a mode of life the close of which is usually decapitation, but the attractions of which are, nevertheless, irresistible. This participation in public affairs, family pride, and a greater refinement of manners, dispose the Greeks of the capital to look down upon their provincial brethren; but they are equally exposed to the tyranny of the Turkish government, and equally pass their lives in fear and trembling. With these brief remarks, I pass on to the provinces, returning eagerly to what constituted ancient Greece.

The present situation \* of this unfortunate country is as universally known as it is universally regretted. Governed by lieutenants and officers of the Porte, whose only object is to extort the utmost from the despised inhabitants, the whole country exhibits the spectacle of the most wretched poverty and depression. It is only matter of surprise that any thing should remain to be taken where plunderer

\* Such was the state of Greece in 1810.

has succeeded to plunderer for centuries. Half of Greece, however, is uncultivated, and half its population has disappeared. In the Morea the traveller may proceed for a day and scarcely meet a human being; he wanders alone through deserted states and ruined cities; in some places the change is so complete, that once populous districts now present the appearance of back settlements in America.

The pressure of the yoke has equally affected the state of the country and the character of the inhabitants. In self-defence the Greeks employ the weapons of cunning, adulation, and fraud; whilst the consciousness of intellectual superiority teaches them to despise the barbarians whom they are condemned to obey. But if they inherit the vanity, they equally inherit the talents, of their ancestors. Whatever requires ingenuity is, in Turkey, performed by the Greeks; they are the secretaries, the clerks, the artificers, the ship-builders, the draftsmen, and the architects; nor have they retained, in this last department, any small degree of excellence, as is testified by the

beauty of the mosques of Constantinople. Amongst those who have had opportunities of study, are to be found men of striking talent and considerable learning.

The Greeks, especially those of the lower order, are remarkable for one quality, which would hardly have been expected to belong to their present condition—that of gaiety; whether it be constitutional, or whether, allowed to take no thought for themselves, they retain the playfulness of children.

It has often been observed, that those, who have long been in a state of subjection, seldom act with moderation if entrusted with power. Of this the Greeks afford frequent examples. The Turks oblige the conquered to undertake all the troublesome part of oppression; in every town, in every village, is a responsible Greek, who is accountable, with his head, to the governor of the district for the conduct of his countrymen, and the return of the taxes and conscriptions. Selected from amongst

his fellow slaves, in constant danger of his life, this man of authority often makes his power so vexatiously felt as to force his countrymen to apply to the very Turks for relief.

Most of the Greeks who are exempted from the necessity of labour, pass their lives in listless inactivity. The meetings in the market-place, and the pipe, are the great resources of the men—gossip and the bath, those of the women. The softer sex bestow much pains on their persons: they dye their hair a sort of deep auburn; they stain their nails red; they blacken their eyebrows and eyelashes, and add an artificial blush to their cheeks. When friends assemble, it is the part of the daughter of the house to do the honours; it is her office to present the pipe, the conserves, and the glass of water, to each of the male visitors as they recline on the couch. In the execution of this task, and in the performance of the Romaic dance, is collected the sum of female accomplishments.

The Greeks who are in office, either in the capi-

tal or the provinces, affect to imitate their masters in the number of their servants and size of their houses. Agents for the Turks, they are permitted to share the advantages of the monopolies which they administrate, or the imposts which they collect; and such is their vanity, that they cannot refuse themselves the dangerous pleasure of display. Generally speaking, the Turkish governors allow these Greeks to prosper till they become sufficiently rich; then, on any slight pretext, cause them to be beheaded, and seize upon their houses and hoards. Catastrophes of this nature, exactions and grievances, usually form the theme of Grecian conversation.

The islands differ from the rest of Greece, both in respect of the greater liberty they enjoy, and, the nature of their population, which is diversified with a great mixture of Italian families, who have remained there ever since the Latin conquest of Byzantium. This department comes under the governance of the Capitan Pasha, or Turkish high-

admiral, who sails through the Archipelago once a year, to collect the poll-tax, and then leaves his tributaries to their own imaginations. The islands enjoy the most delicious climate. Most of them have some particular attraction: each has a costume and habits of its own.

Exceptions to the general character of the Greek nation are found in the mountainous districts, where the natural ramparts that surround them have enabled a few isolated parties to make a successful stand. Of this the inhabitants of Maina, who boast of their Spartan blood, are the most prominent example. Of late years, also, little commercial republics have arisen in one or two of the islands of the Archipelago, principally enriched by procuring corn from the Turkish provinces, and conveying it to the ports of the Mediterranean. The indefatigable exertions of these islanders, the excellence and size of their ships, the length of their voyages, and the rapid increase of their towns, cannot be witnessed without admiration,



and place Greek enterprise in a most favourable point of view.

In Albania, till the time of the present Pasha many comparatively free tribes and towns were to be found, all in situations difficult of access :—the inhabitants of the Chimariot chain—those of Sulli, the siege and subjugation of which was attended with unheard of cruelties. Callirete, of which the peculiar customs are described in the poem, may be considered as not entirely subdued. It stands on a part of the chain of Pindus.

The extraordinary talents of the present governor \* of Albania have raised his province almost into a kingdom, and his countrymen into a nation. Of Slavonian or Illyrian extraction, the hardy race over whom he reigns, and through whom he has

\* This was written in 1819, since which time the powerful Ali has been overtaken by the slow, but almost certain, vengeance of the Turkish government. With Ali perished the system which depended upon the life of its author, and Albania has sunk back into the ordinary condition of a Turkish province.

conquered, had already migrated southward in great numbers, and are to be found in all parts of ancient Greece. The ambition and success of their countryman have collected them into a body, and elevated them, with himself, into distinction. The steady step with which Ali has advanced to power, and the firm hand with which he has retained it, his equal ability to conquer and to govern, will obtain for him the unqualified admiration of those who pay an exclusive homage to energy and talent; but his habitual perfidy and unparalleled cruelties, his extortions and his avarice, must for ever condemn the half of his character to the execration of the wise and the just.

I dare not trust myself to describe the scenery of Albania; there is so much beauty and sublimity in its mountainous regions, especially in the range and passes of Pindus, that, were I to enter upon the subject, I should scarcely know where to stop.

Indeed, the general face of Greece is delightful to the eye. Though now bare of wood, except in

particular districts, the country derives singular beauty from the varied and distinct outline of its mountains and hills, which, even where they are not remarkable for height, are always of remarkable form; whilst the transparent atmosphere, that surrounds them, gives a general character of brilliancy to every scene. In the remote and uninhabited parts, where the pines still clothe the steeps, where the oriental planes still rise in the valleys, and the oleanders fringe the banks of the river, the landscape is gay and lovely in the extreme.

There is one circumstance which particularly strikes the traveller on his journey through Greece; he is astonished to find how small was the extent of those states and republics which have occupied so large a space in history. From Thebes to Corinth is but a morning's ride; from Corinth to Mycenæ, a short stage; and but a few miles from the latter to Argos. He discovers these kingdoms and republics, even Attica and Sparta themselves,

to have been less considerable than some English counties. So true it is, that energy and public virtue must ever be the real measure of nations.

Traces of ancient Greece may be observed in some of the customs and parts of the dress of the present inhabitants : in the flowing robes of the men, and the zone of the women ; the marriage procession and rites ; the Romaic dance, said to have been the invention of Theseus ; the celebration of the return of Spring, and the veneration for particular fountains. Indeed it may be questioned whether the Greeks have not given to their conquerors as many customs as they have received. The flowing robes, the seclusion of the women, and the love of the bath, were peculiar habits of the Greek nation before they were subdued by the Turks ; and, as they were customs discordant from those likely to have been in use amongst wandering tribes, so were they likely to have been adopted by the conquerors when they sank into the slothfulness of repose.

The features of the Greeks are often cast in the antique mould. You frequently observe those lines of beauty which the chisel has handed down to us, especially in the islands, and amongst the women, from many of whom the sculptor and the painter might still delight to catch those hints which make their art immortal.

I have reserved for myself to the last the pleasure of testifying that the Greeks, in general, seem, of late, to have received a considerable impulse, and are making vigorous efforts to relieve themselves from the charge of ignorance. Literature is eagerly cultivated by the chief families of the capital, and every attempt is made to diffuse education through the whole country. The establishment of a Greek press at Vienna, the labours of Koray, and other learned Greeks, and the late intercourse with a crowd of travellers, may be assigned as the chief causes of this disposition. Much has already been done—schools are established in most parts of Greece—especially at Jannina, Scio,

and Smyrna—encouragement is offered to professors of languages and science—useful works are translated \*; a society in the capital has nearly completed an improved dictionary of ancient and modern Greek. The Turks do not appear to oppose, or notice, the progress of education; and these literary pursuits, highly creditable in themselves, may greatly tend to ameliorate the condition of the Greeks in the only way, perhaps, of which their situation admits †.

From the melancholy spectacle of ruined nations I turn to a country which nature has ordained neither to flourish nor decay, but remain for ever

\* Few original works in modern Greek have hitherto appeared. The young Greeks still acquire the rudiments of the history of their forefathers from a Romaic translation of Goldsmith and the young Anacharsis. Amongst the modern publications may be noticed two Gazettes, the one on literary subjects, the other containing public intelligence, which are regularly printed, in modern Greek, at Vienna, transmitted to Constantinople every fortnight, and thence disseminated through the provinces.

† The chapter of accidents has most happily overthrown this hypothesis.

the same. Human labour or human invention can effect no change in the sandy, or the stony Arabia.

There are two sorts of Deserts : the one, a flat extent of sand ; the other, varied in surface, but equally sterile. The latter is the most dreary to a stranger ; he sees hills and valleys, mountains and plains, the same diversity of outline that is common to other countries, and he does not so immediately give up the hope of herbage and cultivation—his heart sinks as he enters valley after valley, only resembling the dry beds of rivers—he casts his eye upon rocky mountains, traverses plains of gravel and pebbles, and finds that all is equally and hopelessly barren. This whole region bears the appearance of having been once, and for a length of time, covered by the waves. In the highest, as well as the lowest, part of the sides of the mountains, the rocks are often honey-combed and fretted, as if by the gradual operation of water, and horizontal strata are seen of a softer stone, in-

terspersed with round pebbles, which have become a part of the mass.

At wide intervals there are springs of brackish water, and spaces that, after the rainy season, afford some little coarse vegetation. This scanty provision keeps alive the camels, goats, and sheep of the genuine Bedouins. Near the springs are sometimes palm-trees, which yield a supply of dates. Tamarisk bushes, stunted acacia trees, from which gum is extracted, with a few withered shrubs, complete the produce of the choicest spots in the Deserts.

In these desolate regions wander the Bedouin Arabs, who take the greatest pride in their sterile home, and treat with contempt the tribes who barter a portion of their freedom for a more settled life or productive situation. The Bedouins are, generally speaking, of low stature ; spare, active make ; sharp, pleasing features ; and teeth beautifully white. Born to a rugged abode, and life of privations, they acquire suitable qualities and habits. They are



able to bear any fatigue, and go for days without water. The keenness of their sight is surprising, and their sense of smelling almost equals that of the dog.

It is indifferent to a Bedouin, when and where he sleeps, or how long at a time; he snatches his rest, as is most convenient, during any part of the day or night. When on a journey, one or two of the party often run on to some distance, throw themselves on the sand, catch a few minutes sleep, and are waked by the last person of the caravan as he passes.

So accurately do the Bedouins observe and remember, that they are able to recognize their route with certainty in the midst of tracts, which, to a stranger, offer neither path nor feature. The Arabs are acquainted with every rock, large stone, or variety of ground; and, with these slender aids, are able to regulate their course, for hundreds of miles, with unerring precision. They remember the exact situation of detached rocks, and even at what hour

particular rocks will afford a shade ; and often support themselves on this certainty, when half fainting with heat, till they reach the shelter.

Each tribe is possessed of a particular district, and has a regular border-line. These districts are of vast extent, in proportion to the population, on account of the scarcity and limited size of the spots that produce any vegetation. The Bedouins remove from one of these spots to the other as their flocks consume the scanty produce. Change of abode gives them little trouble. A hand-mill to grind their corn, a pot to cook in, a coffee-roaster, a mat, and sometimes a portable loom, compose their furniture. Their tents are low, made of camels' hair or goats', resembling those of gipsies. When the encampment is fixed, the tents are placed in lines, one behind the other ; and, at a distance, look like black dots on the plain. Each tent has a partition curtain, to separate the female apartment from that of the master.

The Bedouins are all soldiers and shepherds.

The numerous tribes are frequently at war with one another; and every man, capable of bearing arms, is expected to assist his side. Warlike habits are also fostered by their predatory attacks on caravans.

It must be allowed that the Bedouins do not consider it a crime to plunder; but it should be remembered that they only attack those who pass through their country without asking their protection, or who are escorted by their enemies. Those whom Bedouins have once engaged to protect, may rely upon them with the most implicit confidence; they will guard both their persons and property with the most scrupulous fidelity, and, if necessary, defend them with their lives.

The Bedouins derive considerable profit from protecting caravans through the Deserts; for this they receive regular hire, and the chiefs exact payment for free passage. Their principal and annual undertaking of this nature is the safe conduct of the pilgrims to Mecca from Damascus and Cairo.

The Bedouins supply camels and guards; they know of the springs, and safely bring back a trading multitude, usually amounting to above 70,000 persons, from a journey which occupies nearly three months.

With the profits of protection and of plunder the Bedouins purchase in the cities corn, rice, and beans, arms, and the very few articles which they do not make for themselves. But their usual food is the milk of camels, and dates. Rice and kids are reserved for great occasions, and young camels for public festivals.

In peace, each man takes care of his flock, and lives in a manner truly patriarchal. The chief governs the tribe, and the father his family, after the manner of Abraham. The chiefs take care of their camels, their sons watch the goats, and their daughters bring water from the well. The actual customs of the Desert are a living commentary on the Old Testament.

The Bedouins often amuse their leisure by hunt-

ing the ostrich and the antelope, which abound in parts of the Desert.

The government of the Bedouins is nearly as free as their lives. They scarcely acknowledge the supremacy of the Sultan, and in no wise obey him. Each tribe has a nominal head, the Sheik, whose office is hereditary; but does not, of necessity, descend to the eldest son. The Sheik governs more by example and persuasion than authority. If he displeases the petty Sheiks, they depose him—if he offends his people, they abandon him, and join another tribe. Councils of the chief persons are held on all important matters, and great measures are carried only by a majority of the tribe.

High blood is as much valued in the Deserts as by any civilized nation. The princes and nobles who inhabit the gipsy tents, take the greatest pride in their illustrious descent; but, amongst the Arabs, nobility only arises from antiquity of birth, and cannot be conferred. The reigning chiefs and the

petty Sheiks are the representatives of heads of families, to whom alone the patriarchal system offers homage. Hence the laborious care with which Arabians retain their long genealogies.

This pride of birth is the cause that much ceremony is observed by the Bedouins in their daily intercourse. They are always careful to show the exactly proper degree of attention to the persons they meet. Persons of equal rank first salute each other by joining noses, then taking hands, and afterwards pour forth an endless string of compliments and inquiries. The whole circle rises whenever a person of rank enters.

It is known how sacred the rights of hospitality are held by the Arabs. Ancient and modern instances equally prove that even an enemy is safe if once in their tent, and it has already been mentioned how faithfully they watch over all who claim their protection. No Bedouin can bring himself to hurt any one with whom he has shared a meal. When strangers, escorted through the Desert

come to one of the encampments, an immense wooden bowl, filled with dates, is immediately produced, round which all the principal persons seat themselves; every one present then takes a date, and the strangers, who have thus eaten with the Arabs, know that they are safe.

Opposite feelings equally arise out of this high sense of honour. A Bedouin Sheik must not forgive an expression of contempt, or a look of defiance; and a blow can hardly be effaced except with blood. If a murder is committed, the nearest relation of the victim is generally considered bound to search out and slay the murderer. Sometimes compensation in money, or in kind, is accepted; but usually, life is required for life; and the prosecution of these acts of vengeance often involves families and tribes in long and mortal feuds.

It may appear singular that the Bedouins should despise the cultivators of the earth, and should remain unalterably attached to their own rocks and sand. By some is ascribed as a reason their

love of pure air, and their quick sense of smelling, which renders them unable to bear thickly-inhabited cities; but we received the true motive in the observation of a Bedouin, who, referring to some forced contributions recently exacted at Cairo, exclaimed, "Here we have no exactions, and no Pasha."

The Bedouins know nothing of books, or the sciences; but they partake in that love for poetry and tales which is the passion of the Arabian nation. Often, of an evening, the Bedouins squat round in a circle, and listen with the most serious attention to stories, like those in the Arabian Nights, which one of the party relates in turn. Even the common Arabs have a power of expression that is surprising\*.

\* We had arrived at an encampment which was pitched on a spot where it had not rained for a year till the evening preceding our arrival, when a shower had fallen. A poor Bedouin, who hurried to gaze at us, thus paid his introductory compliment, "Allagh announces to us your arrival by sending us the blessing of rain."



The Bedouin women wear the veil, but not so rigidly as is usual in the East; nor are they such absolute prisoners. A glimpse of their face is sometimes to be caught, and handsome features are seen, the dark eye and arching eyebrow, with the beautiful teeth of the orientals. They are fond of ornaments, wearing immense circular ear-rings of brass, and often rings round their ancles and arms.

The dress of the common Bedouin is a shirt of camel's hair, striped white and black, with wide sleeves, and confined round the waist by a leather girdle: he wears leather sandals, and a small turban of white cotton. Those who can afford it have, in addition, a large, light cloak, with a hood, of white woollen, which they put on when it is wet or cold. The chiefs sometimes wear a pelisse and shawl turban.

The Bedouins of the Desert offer the best picture of savage life. Hospitable, brave, and lovers of freedom for itself, they are distinguished from other savages by their temperance, their higher

sense of honour, the intellectual pleasure they take in works of imagination, and especially by their abstinence from acts of cruelty. Unversed in letters, they preserve many virtues rarely to be found in large communities. Their abhorrence of a mean action, their kindness to the stranger, their contempt of wealth, their perfect good faith, and contented spirit, may be allowed in some degree to compensate for their ignorance of the sciences. He who devotes his days to the immoderate pursuit of gain or of pleasure, will not, perhaps, be justified in despising the Bedouin Arab ; and in whatever community the liberties of men are abridged, or the progress of intellect checked, by really oppressive restrictions, that state, though social, may scarcely be preferred to the Desert.

We have now completed the inspection of the three provinces which are illustrated in the following pages ; and it will be allowed, that to contemplate the Arabs in their wilderness is less me-

lancholy than to survey the present condition of Greece\* or of Syria. Freedom is the one redeeming blessing which dignifies and cheers the life of the Deserts, whilst the loss of freedom has rendered of no avail all the natural advantages of Syria, and all the intellectual pre-eminence of Greece.

\* Written in 1819.



# ILDERIM.

## CANTO I.



# ILDERIM.

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## CANTO I.

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### 1.

THE pale beam, stealing through the matted trees,  
Kist Balbec's walls and stern Abdallagh's tower;  
Soft through Abdallagh's garden crept the breeze,  
Wak'ning each quiet leaf and closed flower :  
Fair was the scene, and tranquil was the hour :     5  
Heav'n still its blessings shed on earth beneath,  
In silent dews that gemm'd the glitt'ring bower ;  
Earth pour'd her thanks in sweets from ev'ry wreath,  
Freshness was in the air, and life in every breath.

## 2.

There, in that spacious garden, was display'd           10  
All that enchants beneath a burning sky ;  
All that belongs to coolness or to shade :  
Thick groves whose verdure soothes the dazzled eye,  
Whose branches, interlac'd above, supply  
Delicious refuge from the noontide glare.           15  
Waters that gushing rise, or murmur by :  
Blossoms that paint the ground, or scent the air :  
Yes, Nature ! all was thine, by art united there.

## 3.

The Ruler's palace, arm'd with outer walls,  
A peaceful semblance next the garden wore ;           20  
Here might be seen a range of open halls,  
And long arcades, with jasmine mantled o'er,  
That stretch'd a skreen those splendid halls before :  
Apart, but not remote, a deep alcove  
(With roof of fretted gold and varied floor)           25  
Invited : thence the wandering eye might rove  
O'er all the cheerful scene—the buildings and the grove.



## 4.

Fronting that arch a chequer'd pavement spread  
Its marble surface, border'd on each side  
With streams, that water'd an enamell'd bed : 30  
A fountain in the midst ; the spiral tide,  
Aloft, with gems of ev'ry colour vied ;  
And, falling, pleas'd with its refreshing sound.  
Beyond a mass of verdure was descried ;  
Trees that with foliage, or with fruit, abound ; 35  
Shrubs that, for ever cloth'd, conceal the walls around.

## 5.

The branching walnut, prodigal of green,  
The feather'd palm, the cypress dark and old,  
Tower'd on high ; with myrtle copse between,  
Or bowers of citron, that at once unfold 40  
Their silver petals and their fruit of gold :  
Distinct, its giant leaf, banana spread,  
Waving in air, like Mecca's flag unroll'd,  
Or purple clusters woo'd from overhead,  
Or yellow cassia bloom'd, and spicy fragrance shed. 45

## 6.

A Moslem there might think he enter'd heav'n,  
Such was the choice of shadowy walk or glade ;  
And there two forms, like those to men forgiven  
Promis'd in Koran verse, together stray'd ;  
The one, all gladness, radiant, bright array'd,      50  
Rivall'd the blushing rose, the garden's queen ;  
Splendid of hue, and gorgeously display'd :  
The other, lovely, but of pensive mien,  
More like the lily show'd, of beauty more serene.

## 7.

The last appear'd to have convers'd with grief;      55  
For as the bright-ey'd maiden frolick'd by,  
Plucking the dewy bud or scented leaf,  
The other traced her path with thoughtful eye,  
But often stopt, and mus'd, and seem'd to sigh.  
The garb she wore implied an humble state,      60  
But modest charms and native dignity  
Burst through that envious veil, accusing fate,  
That overlooks the good, and makes th' aspiring great.

## 8.

The twain past on, and soon repos'd beneath

The near alcove. The bright-ey'd Azza there 65

(Azza, Abdallagh's daughter) formed a wreath

For her, the chosen of her heart, to wear ;

And, as she crown'd Elmyra's flowing hair,

" Ah ! canst thou love me ? " cried the gentle maid ;

" Me, sprung from him who knew not how to spare ! 70

" Me, mistress here, where others should have sway'd,

" Deck'd in the glittering spoils of those my sire be-  
tray'd ? "

## 9.

" Oh, daughter ! little kindred with thy kind ! "

Return'd the slave, and brush'd a tear away.

" Was thine the fault if stern Abdallagh's mind 75

" Contemn'd the right ; if, victor in the fray,

" He seiz'd this city, made the realm his prey,

" And laid the gray-hair'd rightful Emir low ?

" Or thine the fault of that succeeding day,

" When savage caution gave the sudden blow, 80

" And not a male escap'd thy father deem'd his foe ? "

## 10.

“ Allied to those who once were rulers here,  
 “ *His* child who fell when carnage gave the sign,”  
 (Said Azza, sadden’d by that falling tear,)

“ Poor, ruin’d remnant of a princely line,                      85  
 “ Whose injur’d race was trod to earth by mine!  
 “ Born to a station bright as that I fill:  
 “ No, thou canst ne’er forgive”—“ What words are  
     thine?”

Elmyra cried ;—“ my unconsenting will  
 “ Disowns the show of grief—for I am grateful still. 90

## 11.

“ Oh ! on the day that stamp’d an orphan’s doom,  
 “ Then, when the harem was rever’d no more,  
 “ When we, sad mourners o’er the glutted tomb,  
 “ Seiz’d by the hands that in our kindred gore  
 “ Were reeking yet, we, (but an hour before,                      95  
 “ The great, the happy,) to th’ assassin train,  
 “ As spoil and wages, were deliver’d o’er,  
 “ What brought Elmyra then to life again?  
 “ Oh ! what but Azza’s prayer, that did not plead in  
     vain?

## 12.

- “ Didst thou not see me from thy lattic’d hall      100  
“ Unveil’d, and fainting at the palace gate ;  
“ Dragg’d there, with those the partners of my fall,  
“ The newly widow’d and the desolate,  
“ Torn from our proud abodes and high estate ?  
“ Yes! Azza saw me, and dispatch’d a slave ;      105  
“ Gain’d and preserv’d me from impending fate.  
“ Alas! for ye, whom Azza could not save ;  
“ Oh! are ye wretched still, or have ye won the grave?”

## 13.

- “ I pray’d for death, the helpmate of despair,  
“ But Azza struggled with Elmyra’s woe      110  
“ Till she was taught to live—and Azza’s care  
“ Has since so hovered round me where I go,  
“ That I have learnt to bear my lot below.  
“ For Azza’s sake I must not wish to die,  
“ The poor return Elmyra can bestow ;      115  
“ Thou art my sole support beneath the sky.  
“ Oh! if I lov’d thee not, the spring of joy were dry.”

## 14.

“ Enough, kind maid ! I read thy gen’rous breast,  
“ Where all is noble, as becomes thy race ;  
“ Oh ! could the seal of peace be there imprest ! 120  
“ But what can brighten that unalter’d face !  
“ Here, next to Azza’s is Elmyra’s place :  
“ Two years are past that should have brought repose ;  
“ Yet time beguiles thee not from grief’s embrace,  
“ And in thy cup affection vainly throws 125  
“ A sweet, a balmy drop ; the bitter still o’erflows.

## 15.

“ Gentle art thou, and gentleness is won ;  
“ Youthful, and grief is foiled by youth alone ;  
“ Ah ! wherefore then all comfort wilt thou shun,  
“ And why does Azza hear thy deepen’d moan ? 130  
“ Some secret woe, to Azza still unknown ”—  
She stopt—for motionless before her stood  
Elmyra, pale, and stiffen’d into stone ;  
A sudden chillness seemed to freeze her blood,  
The brimful eyes refus’d to pour their kindly flood. 135

## 16.

She seized that passive hand with trembling haste,  
Silent, and waited with beseeching eyes  
Till grief relax'd in tears—"Oh! yield at last  
"The serpent thought that in thy bosom lies—  
"Share it with me—dismiss the vain disguise." 140  
Tow'rds Heaven her snowy arms Elmyra tost,  
And fix'd a look of wildness on the skies,  
Then murmur'd forth—"Oh! hopes for ever crost!  
"Azza! Elmyra lov'd—and he she lov'd is lost!

## 17.

"Azza! thou ne'er hast lov'd, and dost not know"—  
She stopt—a voice resounded on her ear 146  
That clos'd at once the story of her woe:  
"Not now, we must not meet:" with speed of fear  
Elmyra fled, Abdallagh's self was near.  
That wonted sight she could not now sustain; 150  
She could not now repress the falling tear,  
Forget the recent scene, be calm again,  
Behold the man of blood, and all her soul restrain.

## 18.

He came, but mark'd not or Elmyra's flight,  
Or Azza's pallid look and troubled air, 155  
Nor smiling met his child, his sole delight ;  
Nor in that garden seem'd releas'd from care,  
From plagues to which dominion still is heir.  
Silent he mov'd, and on his forehead wore  
A scowl of anger, such as demons wear ; 160  
His very face reveal'd his deeds of yore,  
He look'd inur'd to guilt, and seem'd to purpose more.

## 19.

How troubled, then, was gentle Azza's mind,  
That, newly waken'd was careering fast  
O'er crimes by that approaching sire design'd : 165  
Her soul was turn'd upon the guilty past ;  
Nor with the present promise less aghast,  
She felt the streams of Nature's current freeze :  
Around his neck her arms she long'd to cast,  
But horror check'd ; she long'd to clasp his knees, 170  
But only stood and shook, like myrtle in the breeze.



## 20.

“Thou tremblest, Azza! what hast thou to fear?

“Dear as thou art, and ever must remain:

“But there are those who can molest me here.

“What profits it that undisturb’d I reign, 175

“That, with the conquer’d sire, the son was slain,

“That none survive to clamour forth their right?

“What profits this, if o’er the ravag’d plain

“An outcast robber, aided by the night,

“Can spread destruction round, and thwart my baffled  
might?” 180

## 21.

“What means my father?”—“For a circling year

“I scorn’d the young marauder’s petty band,

“Nor deem’d him worthy of Abdallagh’s spear;

“And now, by Heav’n! the unresisted hand,

“The name of Ilderim, appals the land! 185

“Strange that he seems audacious war to wage

“Chiefly with me: the outlaw gives command

“To spare the peasant’s humble heritage,

“But sweeps Abdallagh’s wealth, and mocks Abdal-  
lagh’s rage.

## 22.

“ Last night the band descended from the wood ; 190  
“ They came where, guarded, in the city’s view,  
“ My choicest coursers cropt the grassy food ;  
“ They smote, they seiz’d ; and, as away they flew,  
“ Their leader thus address the recreant crew  
“ Who lost, yet liv’d ; ‘ Of us who wrought the deed, 195  
“ Go tell your lawless chief, and tell him too,  
“ The time may come when Ilderim shall lead  
“ Back to his proper stall Abdallagh’s favourite steed.’

## 23.

“ By Allagh ! he shall rue the word he said !  
“ The robber’s den is not secure from gold, 200  
“ And, with its help, a pitfall shall be laid  
“ To catch these wolves that break into my fold :  
“ They think the tenure slight by which I hold ;  
“ A stranger lord, with but a victor’s claim :  
“ They think me weak, and this has made them bold :  
“ But ere yon orb of light renews its flame, 206  
“ They shall be better taught—howe’er my title came.”

# ILDERIM.

## CANTO II.



## ILDERIM.

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### CANTO II.

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#### 1.

THE plain was lost in shade, but splendor, yet,  
Illumin'd Lebanon's majestic head.  
There last delay'd the sun, and, ere he set, 210  
Tinted the snow-clad heights with rosy red,  
With living gold adorn'd his western bed,  
Then plung'd and disappear'd—o'er earth and skies  
At once the mantle of the dark is spread!  
An instant more—heav'n's myriad lamps arise, 215  
And night with day itself in radiant beauty vies.



## 4.

- “ The fell Usurper—does he knit his brow,” 235  
Cried Mirza, “ grieving for his fav’rite steed ?  
“ He little deems what fate is working now,  
“ What future storms these upper regions breed ;  
“ The mountain band has friends prepar’d at need ;  
“ This secret promise of our great ally.”— 240  
“ Yes, he is sworn who never will recede ;  
“ Yes, Mirza, now this troubled heart beats high,  
“ Now Ilderim may hope to ruin and to die.”

## 5.

- Again he look’d :—“ Dear city ! art thou then  
“ So changed, so desolate, and brought so low, 245  
“ The tyrant’s fortress and the dragon’s den ?  
“ But we will reach him still ;—the hidden foe  
“ He feels already ;—time perchance may show  
“ What arm—false tyrant, reckless of thy doom,  
“ In vain thou had’st the purple torrent flow, 250  
“ Vengeance is still alive—through shade and gloom  
“ The fiery bolt shall strike, the loos’d destroyer come.

## 6.

“ He widow’d them—he made them fatherless:—  
“ Oh! where is ——? Allagh grant that *she* be dead,  
“ Cold in the grave, and rescued from distress:      255  
“ But this avenging steel shall yet be red;  
“ His life-blood pay for every tear she shed:  
“ His dying groan ”—again he fix’d his eyes  
Long on the vale with mute expression, dread.  
“ Mirza, away! these dark and friendly skies      260  
“ Dismiss us to our post—away—to enterprise!”

## 7.

They left the cliff, and sought th’ expecting band.  
Beneath, amongst the rocks, where darkly frown’d  
The cavern’d granite, scoop’d by Nature’s hand,  
Where pine and cedar stretch’d a skreen around,      265  
And mountain stream and mountain turf was found,  
The band await: the watch-fire’s bickering light,  
That ting’d with red the figures and the ground,  
Reveal’d th’ obscurely moving troop to sight,  
But left the craggy piles in shades of deeper night.      270



## 8.

The tether'd steeds that ready harness'd fed,  
Neigh'd at strange feet within their forage-space :  
'Tis Ilderim—he came with stately tread,  
And brow severe, unstain'd by sign or trace  
Of grief or softness, such as erst had place 275  
When only Mirza saw—but valour high,  
And stern resolve, was stamp'd upon his face.  
Rule and dominion threaten'd from his eye,  
That aw'd the subject band, they knew not how or why.

## 9.

“ What ! are ye arm'd ?—our last essay was good : 280  
“ How likes Abdallagh's stud the mountain air ?  
“ To night, ye know, his herds become our food.”  
“ Chieftain ! ” said Hassan—of the troopers there,  
One vers'd in wiles—“ As with observant care  
“ I watch'd at eve, those herds I chanc'd to view, 285  
“ And saw the shepherds to new ground repair ;  
“ The spot I marked ”—“ Then, Hassan, be our clue.  
“ He has inform'd us oft, and ever has been true.”

## 10.

They mounted, and were gone—their steep descent,  
(The sole access to that secure retreat,) 290

Beside a yawning gulf, unguarded, went :

The road, a path that tried the coursers' feet,  
With stony steps ; and oft, with rain or sleet  
More fearful, seem'd the nearest way to death.

Firm hearts had they who nightly could repeat 295  
That threat'ning course, and hear the floods beneath  
Thunder amidst the gloom, nor fear-struck, hold their  
breath.

## 11.

That pass o'ercome, they rode on smoother ground,  
'Mid groves of pine, or copse of scented bay ;  
The fire-fly, darting through the shades around, 300  
Spangled the dark ; from bush or shelt'ring spray,  
The Bulbul sang, and, oft, a silver ray  
Gleam'd o'er their path, and chequer'd half the wood ;  
Soft on the leaves the light wind died away ;  
Mild was the air, and gentle, Nature's mood ; 305  
A time for lovers fit—ah ! more than men of blood.

## 12.

Oh ! this is not a Northern poet's dream,  
Whose fancy toils, that night may have a charm ;  
His land ne'er show'd a subject for his theme.  
Those only climes that suns of splendor warm, 310  
Secure from icy blight, and storm's alarm ;  
Where not a star but sheds peculiar light,  
And dews descend, nor bring the shepherd harm ;  
Where nature freshens in the still moon's sight,  
These only climes unfold the loveliness of night. 315

## 13.

Nought reck'd the robbers of that loveliness ;  
At length they trod the plain, and Hassan led :—  
“ Beyond yon rocks, within a deep recess,  
“ The herds are there ; ” with eager hearts they sped ;  
Each man prepar'd, the Chieftain at their head, 320  
They pass the scatter'd trees that intervene.  
The rocks now echo to the coursers' tread ;  
When sudden, from behind that craggy skreen,  
A cloud of horsemen rush, and all the plot is seen.

## 14.

Hassan had darted on to join the foe : 325

“ Traitor ! ” cried Ilderim ; and, with a bound,  
Swift as the arrow from the twanging bow,  
Pursues the wretch—in vain the host surround ;  
In vain the baffled sabres seek to wound ;—

Can Ilderim be cheated of his prey ? 330

Uncheck'd, he reach'd his mark ; and, as to ground  
The trembling craven leapt, at one essay  
Smote off that perjur'd head, and fiercely turn'd away.

## 15.

Fatal pursuit ! the Chieftain turn'd to find

A mass of foes that all regress denied, 335  
And sever'd him from those he left behind :

Alone he charg'd, and scatter'd terror wide,  
But fail'd the crowding squadrons to divide ;  
The night confus'd his aim, but lent a shield :

Madd'ning with rage, he rush'd from side to side ; 340  
No single arm that falchion seem'd to wield,  
Which vainly scatter'd death, and lighten'd o'er the field.

## 16.

Meanwhile the robbers wag'd unequal strife,  
But firmly stood, and kept the host at bay ;  
Each held his ground, and Mirza gave them life. 345  
They felt the shock, nor yet they yielded way,  
But where was he, their leader and their stay ?  
His absence only could their courage tame :  
Wild and disorder'd grew the mingled fray ;  
Fiercer on weaken'd ranks the numbers came, 350  
In vain the band invok'd their distant guardian's name.

## 17.

Then Mirza knew the ruin of the brave ;  
But, nobly bent a last device to try,  
Exclaim'd, " If still he lives, I still may save !"  
Nor more, but spurr'd his steed, and, thund'ring by,  
Rush'd onward till Abdallagh met his eye. 356  
" Tyrant ! from Ilderim receive thy fate !"  
He said, resolved that one or both should die ;  
Resolv'd, at least, to glut the tyrant's hate  
With that fictitious prey, and make the storm abate. 360

## 18.

Headlong he struck—Abdallagh's ready brand

So well to that descending steel replies,

That Mirza's weapon, shiver'd from his hand,

Left him unarm'd, a naked, helpless prize.

Deceiv'd, Abdallagh seiz'd the sacrifice ; 365

Seiz'd with tumultuous joy—"The dreaded ; thou,

"Thou, Ilderim, the valiant and the wise ?

"Th' event has little answer'd to thy vow.

"Traitor ! whate'er thou wert, Abdallagh's captive now !

## 19.

"Didst thou come here for death, because thy train 370

"Destroy'd, or scatter'd, own Abdallagh's might ?

"Death thou shalt have, but not on battle-plain :

"Within our walls the scaffold shall requite

"A felon's base career—break off the fight !—

"Enough is done." The mountain's broken band 375

Behold their foes retiring through the night,

And, unoppos'd, in mute amazement stand,

Nor know the deed that brought a shipwreck'd crew to  
land.

## 20.

But what was passing then in Mirza's breast?

Men, warm'd by action, oft have dauntless been : 380  
But chains, and death deferr'd are valor's test.

Yet Mirza, when, on each surrounding mien,  
Fierce glances that demanded blood were seen,  
Advanc'd with tranquil air, and seem'd content.

Abdallagh, as he marked that brow serene, 385  
Perceiv'd no common prize by fortune sent :  
How perilous the soul that did not then relent!

## 21.

Ere long the victors reach'd the city's gate,

Onward the sleep-disturbing triumph roll'd ;  
The Chief, dismounting, spoke the captive's fate : 390  
“ With bolt and bar secure this ruffian bold,  
“ And let the town at break of dawn be told  
“ Their eyes shall gaze upon the man they dread ;  
“ When the next sun his midway course shall hold,  
“ Then shall the caitiff pay his forfeit head, 395  
“ And Ilderim become—e'en as the dust we tread.”

## 22.

The morning broke—and all the city heard

Of the night's ambush and Abdallagh's gain ;  
But sign of joy or triumph scarce appear'd.

Weigh'd down to earth by fierce oppression's chain,  
Bewailing him, their ancient Emir, slain, 401  
That town was reckless of the mountain horde :

What if the storm no longer swept the plain,  
Yet tyranny's arm'd servants, and their lord,  
Remain'd to plunder still, and fleece them with the  
sword. 405

## 23.

The morn advanc'd—within his hall of state,

Girt by the train who shar'd the nightly fray,  
Abdallagh sat, triumphant and elate,

Waiting till noon should end the robber's day.  
Sudden, a slave, with looks of wild dismay, 410  
Rush'd in, and cast himself before the throne.

“ Speak, loit'ring wretch ! or dearly shalt thou pay ! ”  
“ Alas ! our mistress ! ” — “ What of Azza ? ” — “ Gone.  
“ The harem holds her not, and this we know alone.”



## 24.

Fierce from his couch th' astonish'd father leapt :—

“ Liar and fool !—or, if the tale be true, 416

“ Thou and the rest ”—“ the guard has never slept.

“ Last night we saw her safe—nor other knew,

“ Till morn's return ; nor in the printless dew

“ One step we trace—all search is unrepaid.” 420

“ Ourselves will search : ”—but, as the Chief withdrew,

His rapid course a breathless peasant stay'd :

“ Dread Chief ! I bring thee news of her the captive  
maid.”

## 25.

“ Captive, and whose ? ”—“ As early morning broke

“ I watch'd abroad the flocks that are my care : 425

“ A horseman met me, check'd his steed, and spoke :

“ ‘ Abdallagh's hind is in the hunter's snare,

“ His milk-white hind is in the robber's lair.

“ These from our master to thy lord proclaim :

“ Thy lord has seiz'd what may his loss repair ; 430

“ And would Abdallagh know our master's name,

“ Say that from Ilderim the words thou bearest came.’ ”

## 26.

“ What tale is this? when coop’d in yonder tower—

“ Go, bring the robber here—my daughter ta’en?

“ Snatch’d from the safeguard of her midnight bower?

“ The thief unseen, unheard? return’d again      436

“ By dawn from yonder fastness to the plain?

“ Was I deceiv’d? These slaves—they durst not tell

“ For truth the idle coinage of their brain!

“ What fiend is this, let loose from deepest hell,      440

“ To blast my wasted realm and beard me where I  
    dwell?”

# ILDERIM.

## CANTO III.



# ILDERIM.

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## CANTO III.

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### 1.

Down Balbec's vale a train of horsemen ride,  
Amongst them one who seems on air to move :  
He darts along, excites his courser's pride,  
And eyes the groves around, the skies above, 445  
With rapture, such as souls enamour'd prove.  
'Tis the freed captive, from the dungeon's gloom,  
Light, his enjoyment ; liberty, his love ;  
At once revers'd the terrors of his doom,  
For him each passing breeze from Eden seems to come.

## 2.

Unsolv'd, the manner of the mystic deed 451  
Confirm'd the tale that sunder'd Mirza's chain ;  
Abdallagh pays the price of Mirza freed ;  
In vain averse—yet led he not the train  
That went to win his daughter back again ; 455  
Him sullen rage within his palace bound ;  
Rage, and the ferment of a fever'd brain,  
That heard a viewless weapon smite around,  
And, doubtful, sought a shield to raise against the  
wound.

## 3.

The train advanc'd ;—the open plain they cross, 460  
So flatly spread its level surface wide,  
It seem'd a lake, that wooded isles emboss ;  
Mountains its shores, which rise on every side  
Abrupt as rocks o'er Ocean's flowing tide ;  
Majestic coast, that lifts its peaks on high ! 465  
Eternal snows that summer's heat deride !  
Who sees them glitter in the azure sky,  
Nor stands, arrested there, in awe and ecstasy ?

## 4.

The train advanc'd—and soon, at distance yet,  
Perceiv'd the progress of a mountain band, 470  
With whom the lovely prey—ere long they met,  
And front to front the silent squadrons stand;  
A short-liv'd truce restrain'd each lance and brand;  
But motion swift, and haughty look, betray'd  
How ill the warriors could their ire command. 475  
Anon we meet—each threat'ning eye convey'd,  
And when we meet again, the sword shall not be stay'd.

## 5.

They paus'd not long.—But, ah! that short delay  
Sufficed the calm of Azza's breast to break:  
Of Mirza's act she knew—his bold essay, 480  
His life adventur'd for another's sake;  
Virtues that woman's fondest praise awake.  
Him now she saw, on whom she thought before,  
Beheld that force a graceful form could take,  
And felt that fate might home and sire restore, 485  
But own'd an object now that she could value more.

## 6.

And Mirza, with enchain'd attention, ey'd  
That maid for whom Abdallagh show'd him grace.  
The light breeze came, and gently drew aside  
The veil she wore ; and, ere she could replace, 490  
His watchful eye had caught her blushing face.  
'Then to himself :—" By Mecca's holy shrine,  
" Behold an angel come of demon race !  
" Oh ! how could he who won that maid divine,  
" So heavenly fair a prize, for e'en his friend, resign ?"

## 7.

Brief, unobserv'd, the thought of either breast, 496  
And now they part—each troop receives its own.  
The joyful robbers scale the mountain's crest ;  
Along the vale Abdallagh's child is gone.  
Much had that silent maid to muse upon : 500  
But the last moment more engag'd her mind  
Than all the chances she had lately known :  
The robbers' cave scarce left a trace behind,  
And e'en the night's alarm was given to the wind.



## 8.

Anon before the rescued maiden's eyes, 505

Beneath the steeps, the city's eastern skreen,  
Rais'd on their rocky pedestal, arise

The domes and turrets of the valley's queen,  
Balbec appears, amidst her groves of green.

The maiden heeded not, nor heeded more, 510

Though now she past the glory of the scene,  
That ruin'd pile by genii rais'd of yore,  
Obedient to the seal their earthly master wore.

## 9.

No need to tell how wounded pride o'erthrew

Abdallagh's triumph in his child's embrace ; 515

How, when the Chief retired, Elmyra flew,

With trembling rapture, to supply his place.

" The present cannot yet the past efface,"

She cried—" the morning's terrors yet remain :

" But tell me all—and for Elmyra trace 520

" The path, the magic—we have sought in vain,

" Nor learn how force or fraud its end could here  
attain."

## 10.

From some deep dream of self-concenter'd thought,  
As the voice ended Azza seem'd to start ;  
Then (inly pleas'd to hold discourse on aught,      525  
Save that the subject nearest to her heart,)  
Replied—" thy friend but little can impart :  
" 'Thou may'st remember when we parted last,  
" All reckless then of ambush'd force or art,  
" Parch'd by the heat that sultry summer cast,      530  
" I stood to catch the breeze, that fann'd me as it past.

## 11.

" Long time I stood, regardless of the hour,  
" And trac'd the gaudy meteors as they flew,  
" And heard the crane's shrill clatter from the tower.  
" At length on yonder couch, that caught my view,  
" Rob'd as I was, my wearied limbs I threw.      536  
" Unknown to grief, and unsuspecting harms,  
" Full soon I drank the sweet oblivious dew :  
" A sudden motion gave my first alarms,  
" I wak'd—and wak'd within—a man's—a robber's arms.

## 12.

- “ I know no more—for, overcome with dread,      541  
“ I swoon’d—and when again alive to fear,  
“ Without the walls I prest a grassy bed,  
“ The robber watching o’er :—with words of cheer  
“ He tried to soothe—and from the fountain near 545  
“ Sprinkled my brow—then hastily unbound  
“ A ready courser from the fasten’d spear,  
“ And vaulted up, and rais’d me from the ground :  
“ The plain was overpast—the mountains clos’d around.”

## 13.

- “ Mysterious deed ! Gain entrance here unseen !      550  
“ Unseen escape—nor gate, nor bar o’erthrown !  
“ Our lynx-ey’d guardians still have watchful been ;  
“ Nought ’scapes their eyes—one method, one alone—  
“ Some passage, to thy father’s self unknown,  
“ These ancient walls may hide within their breast ; 555  
“ Yet, how should he discern it ? Those are gone  
“ Who knew the secrets—Azza ! speak the rest—  
“ This dreaded Chief was he who snatch’d thee from  
thy nest ? ”

## 14.

- I knew not who, till on the robber's height—  
“ There, when at last by giddy paths we came, 560  
“ Numbers pour'd forth, and made the startled night  
“ Resound with Ilderim—'twas he—the same,  
“ The terror of the vale—the dreaded name.”—  
“ What man is this that darts his sudden blows,  
“ Rapid and fatal as the lightning's flame? 565  
“ That, like a midnight spirit, comes and goes—  
“ For whom a secret way the rocks and walls disclose—

## 15.

- “ Awful—unfathom'd—yet, it seems, to thee  
“ His mood was rather gentle than severe? ”  
“ Gentle as that the stamp of high degree. 570  
“ He school'd his troop, who lent attentive ear,  
“ To do me homage, more than waits me here :  
“ Still at my side he took his guardian stand ;  
“ Yet was his look, that overaw'd my fear,  
“ The look of one so gifted to command, 575  
“ That all subdued I felt—the humblest of his band.

## 16.

“ His eye was cold for all it look’d upon ;  
“ So cold, that from its glance I sank aside :  
“ He seemed to gaze on woman as on stone.  
“ Some secret grief, which he in vain would hide, 580  
“ Beneath the mask of an obdurate pride,  
“ Weighs on his soul ; for, as he stood, my shield,  
“ At times he watch’d me silently, and sigh’d ;  
“ Then paler looks and quivering lips reveal’d  
“ A troubled storm within that scarce would be conceal’d.” 585

## 17.

“ Mysterious still ! but wears he on his face  
“ The blazon of his savage trade defin’d ? ”  
“ Ah ! no—he beams with each severer grace ;  
“ Nature has fix’d the stamp of noble mind  
“ On his majestic brow—he looks design’d 590  
“ To rule, extending blessings with his sway :—  
“ But grief has class’d him with the sterner kind :  
“ E’en thus the sun, obscur’d his cloudy way,  
“ Less than himself appears, and half dispenses day.

## 18.

- “ O'er his left brow he bears an ancient scar.”— 595  
“ A scar ! and on his brow ? ”—“ Does this surprise ?  
“ Warriors may well retain the marks of war.  
“ The greater marvel in his bosom lies ;  
“ From thence, at morn, before my watchful eyes,  
“ He drew a rosary, past all compare ! 600  
“ Each bead, a flawless pearl of wond'rous size ;  
“ Strange to behold a robber use at prayer  
“ Such beads as are esteem'd the Sultan's single share.

## 19.

- “ And from this rosary there hung below  
“ An amulet, with rubies studded o'er ;— 605  
“ He gaz'd upon it—and a groan of woe ”—  
“ Or from the bleeding dead that pledge he tore,  
“ Or it is he—that being I deplore—  
“ Himself—and death was cheated of his prey.  
“ Azza ! those pearls—that amulet he wore— 610  
“ To him might well be known each secret way ;  
“ All-righteous Allagh ! hear ! nor let this hope betray.”

## 20.

Silence th' extent of Azza's wonder prov'd :

At length—"What he, the mountain's fearful guest?"

"Thou hast pourtray'd the man Elmyra lov'd ; 615

"Each mark, each mystic circumstance exprest,

"Agrees, betokens him—within this breast

"Hope glows again—nor will I quench the flame—

"I'll tell thee all—but grant a little rest."

Breathless and pale th' exhausted maid became, 620

The shock that rais'd her soul had all unhing'd her  
frame.

## 21.

"Forbear awhile—hereafter shalt thou speak,

"Let Azza guide thee to the myrtle bower,

"Where the cool breeze may play upon thy cheek—

"New mysteries—the fruit of every hour— 625

"Crowd on thy mind, and half confound its power."

Slowly they went, enwrap't in shades of night :

But, as they past the portal of the tower,

A boding vision burst upon their sight,—

Far Lebanon—all flames—a blaze on every height. 630

## 22.

War's lurid sign—arrested by surprise,  
Trembling they stood—and mark'd, with silent fear,  
That dread illumination meet the skies,  
A bright addition to the starry sphere.  
Unknown for whom the coming storm was near, 635  
Each tender mind, by kindred spirit led,  
Flew to the object which it held most dear :  
“ Allagh ! if once thy favour stood his stead,  
“ Shall fate o’ertake him now ? ” Elmyra faintly said.

## 23.

“ His friend, oh ! favour too ! ” Elmyra heard, 640  
And started back ; but, sinking on her breast,  
Blushing, reveal'd the love-lorn maid appear'd.  
“ I thought to hide—but terror has confest ;  
“ That friend I saw—Elmyra guess the rest,  
“ Nor chide a heart too kindred with thine own.”—645  
“ Oh ! dearer now, because like me oppress,  
“ Our bosoms are in tune, though sad their tone ;  
“ Be those each other's stay, who number groan for  
groan.



## 24.

“ Oh ! had serener skies—but hand in hand

“ We’ll meet whatever storms yon clouds prepare, 650

“ And sink together, or together stand.”

She spoke—and fiercer grew the fiery glare,

And tumult rose upon the darken’d air ;

Shouts from the city—drums their ’larum sound—

Nor long ere echoes from the vale declare 655

No common host advancing o’er the ground ;

The voice of battle swells—the death-shot peals around.

## 25.

Forth from the harem rush affrighted Moors—

“ Lady ! retreat, a safer harbour win—

“ We come to bar the harem’s massive doors ; 660

“ War is without, and treason is within,

“ All Balbec maddens with seditious din :

“ One they proclaim, awaken’d from the dead.”

Trembling, the conscious maidens hurried in :

The pangs of hope, by that new fuel fed, 665

More tried Elmyra’s soul, than danger’s ’whelming  
dread.



ILDERIM.

CANTO IV.



# ILDERIM.

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## CANTO IV.

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### 1.

DREAD sign, when Lebanon is crown'd with flame!

Then Syria knows that, arming for the fight,  
The warrior Druses point their levell'd aim:—

Intrepid race! who seiz'd that fortress height, 670

Resolv'd on liberty, in power's despite:—

Oppression's foes! protectors of th' opprest!

To you the wrong'd, the helpless, bend their flight,  
And find a home, or have their cause redrest:

Ye taste of joy yourselves, and would have others blest.

## 2.

Scheming swift vengeance on the mountain band 676

Abdallagh sate, awaken'd from his dream

By that bright warning to a threaten'd land—

Him did it threaten? little did he deem

Foes had already crost the valley's stream; 680

For art and night had cast a veil o'er all.

Weak hands were left to bid the war-fire beam,

That warns confederate ranks within the wall,

And fires the secret mine, and works a tyrant's fall.

## 3.

A moment, and the people's shout began; 685

Tumult and strife that pierc'd the ear of sleep;

And from the walls affrighted soldiers ran—

“ On us—on us—the demons of the steep,

“ Close at our gates;—and through the city sweep

“ Mad crowds, who cry their Emir's race survives.” 690

“ Bring me my steed—a faithful watch ye keep—

“ Ye drones, who slumber whilst they storm our hives—

“ Back to the southern gate—defend it with your lives.

## 4.

“ Their Emir’s race—a lie conceiv’d in hell!—

“ My steed! I say.—A plot in darkness plann’d!—

“ Another fool—and what hast thou to tell?” 696

“ All Lebanon—with them the mountain band,

“ Led on by Ilderim.”—“ Base slave! unmann’d

“ By the vain terror of an empty sound!

“ Let Hell’s own legions at our portals stand, 700

“ We’ll drive them back!—Away—destroy—confound!”

He vaulted on his steed, and thunder’d o’er the ground.

## 5.

Uproar and gloom prevail’d—within—without—

“ Your Emir’s race—ye men of Balbec rise!”

Such was the cry.—Abdallagh heard the shout 705

With rage that had not leisure to chastise—

Fierce as the bolt that flames along the skies,

Threat’ning, he past through that tempestuous roar;

He reach’d the gate—’twas clos’d—the hostile cries

Clamour’d without—th’ assailant numbers pour, 710

Like tempest-anger’d waves, that dash against the shore.

## 6.

“ What, are they foil’d?—These gates are faithful still—

“ Treason has fail’d, and shall not long appal,

“ Shout forth yon rebel Rayas as they will:—

“ Pour down your murd’rous volleys, one and all, 715

“ Ye, from above—where’s Omar?—On the wall?”

“ Chieftain! the postern was the charge he chose.”

“ Summon him here:”—but, as they turn’d to call,

A sudden outcry from the city rose; 719

Shouts of a rapid crowd that tow’rd the portal flows.

## 7.

“ Betray’d!—betray’d!” the clamour onward came;

Murmurs, and hostile shouts resounding wide;

Ringings of steel, and torches’ waving flame;

Trampling of coursers.—“ From the postern side—

“ Treason—’tis Omar’s—dotard! to confide 725

“ In aught but you—sons of a kindred land—

“ On with your Chief, and turn this coming tide,

“ If aught of faithful”—and a desperate band

Rush’d with their desperate Chief against the flood at  
hand.



## 8.

The shock of rushing waves! they meet—they close—  
Fierce was the shock—and fearful was the sound :  
This way and that, as battle ebbs and flows, 732  
The crimson billow rolls—the darkness round  
Disorder'd all—but each his leader found  
In unrelenting fury, or despair. 735  
Scarce lost or won a single inch of ground,  
Fate seem'd to waver for a moment there,  
While carnage stain'd the earth, and clamour rent the  
air.

## 9.

'Twas but a while—engag'd for life and crown,  
The frantic tyrant made his last essay : 740  
But there were swords that bore resistance down :  
How rush'd the torrent, when before its sway  
Crumbled the mound that interpos'd delay!  
O'er the red pavement rush'd the broken train—  
The gates they once defended clos'd their way—745  
Fear burst the bars—through portals, chok'd with slain,  
Pursued, pursuers, past, and mingled on the plain.

## 10.

Loos'd from the mass, emerging from the gate,  
Rush'd Ilderim—amid that scatter'd flight  
He sought for only one—revenge and hate,      750  
Yet unappeas'd, were craving for their right.  
“Tyrant! where art thou? tumult, nor the night,  
“Shall hide, or save—Abdallagh, dost thou live?  
“The mountain robber dares thee to the fight.  
“Fail me not, Fate—nor let my foe receive      755  
“From other hands the wound that only these should  
give.”

## 11.

No fruitless search—Abdallagh, borne along,  
Had vainly tried to check the course of fear;  
But now, discumber'd from th' o'erwhelming throng,  
Back tow'rds the host he spurr'd his fierce career,  
Bereft of hope, but dauntless; on his ear      76  
Fell that defiance, echoed far and wide.  
“Here, at thy beck, behold Abdallagh here!  
“Mortal or fiend, to earth or hell allied,  
“Abdallagh shuns thee not—whate'er befriends thy  
side!”      765

## 12.

A moment, and they join'd—"I thank thee, Fate!

"Yet, tyrant! ere my ready steel I bare,

"Thou shalt confess the justice of my hate:

"Who drove me, frantic, to my mountain lair?

"Who scath'd this wither'd bosom with despair? 770

"Thou, curst destroyer of my sire and race!"—

\* The moon-beam, piercing through the clouded air,  
Cast its full radiance on that hidden face—

Abdallagh started back, and speechless, gaz'd a space.

## 13.

"The graves are open'd!—Spirit of the night, 775

"What power has burst the tomb's relentless chain?

"Thy looks are princely Caled's to my sight,—

"Son of the Emir—near his father slain—

"Hence to thy narrow prison-house again!"

"Yes—it is Caled—but with life endued— 780

"He cur'd my wounds who bore me from the plain.

"Tyrant! in unavailing blood embued,

"Art thou by Caled's hate unrighteously pursued?"

## 14.

Unnerv'd, Abdallagh shrunk—he turn'd his steed,  
And fled before his foe—but angry shame 785  
And haughty courage, in extremest need,  
Fast, fast renew'd that bosom's native flame—  
Sudden he wheel'd—and, with a desperate aim,  
Met his pursuer—" Fortune is thy slave—  
" Yet shalt thou find Abdallagh's steel the same 790  
" As when it sent thy father to his grave,  
" And won the conquer'd realm that Caled could not  
save."

## 15.

They clos'd—but Caled darted on his prey  
As from on high the pouncing eagle flies ;  
Abdallagh blindly check'd the weapon's sway. 795  
Caled has struck ; and, never more to rise,  
Stretch'd on a bloody bed th' usurper lies :—  
Furious in death he bites the reckless plain,  
And with faint menace of his hand defies ;  
Then sullen parts—whilst on his brow remain 800  
Fierce pride, and fiercer hate, triumphant over pain.

## 16.

“ ’Tis done! Ye victims of ambition’s rage  
“ Ye are reveng’d, and Caled’s part is o’er.  
“ I came not here to seize my heritage,  
“ For only this—if life would charm me more 805  
“ Thou must arise, fell tyrant, and restore  
“ That tender flow’ret crush’d to earth by thee.  
“ Vain thought! and now that thou art laid in gore,  
“ Where is the friend shall do as much for me?  
“ Oh! for a kindly sword, to set the victor free!” 810

## 17.

To where the contest struggled in the van,  
He turn’d his course; but, as he hurried by,  
Stopt short, arrested by a wounded man,  
Who from the ground, where he was left to die,  
Rais’d the appeal of his resistless cry— 815  
“ A moment pause—there weighs upon my breast  
“ A fatal secret, and my end is nigh.  
“ Lives are at stake.”—“ Thou soul, by guilt oppress,  
“ Relieve thee of thy load, and Allagh grant thee rest.”

## 18.

- “ Whoe’er thou art—seek the victorious Chief— 820  
“ Abdallagh’s palace—thither bid him lead  
“ His conquering troops to woman’s prompt relief—  
“ Abdallagh’s lovely child is doom’d to bleed,  
“ All, all the harem—so himself decreed,  
“ If fortune to the robber’s vow replied— 825  
“ I bore the message—death rewards the deed,  
“ And angry Azrael, threat’ning—at my side—  
“ Oh ! snatch me from his frown !”—the caitiff groan’d,  
and died.

## 19.

- “ They must be sav’d.—Oh ! monster to the last !  
“ I must not rest till thou art foil’d again— 830  
“ Yet how ? for, ere the palace gate be past,  
“ The guard within, beholding Caled’s train—  
“ What means or art ?—it flashes on my brain :  
“ Once more the secret of the rock shall aid.  
“ Mirza, where art thou ?” Rapid, o’er the plain 835  
He sought his friends ; who, for their Chief dismay’d,  
Rejoic’d at his return, and at his call obey’d.

## 20.

The palace, on the city's strongest side,  
    Stood near the walls, remote from either gate ;  
A deep ravine such outer trench supplied                   840  
    As art might vainly seek to emulate.  
    Aloft, austere in solitary state,  
Thron'd on the rock, the princely building rose :  
    Where nature watch'd, man needed not to wait :  
Those craggy ramparts mock assailant foes—           845  
Nor stands a soldier there to mark who comes or goes.

## 21.

To that ravine th' acquainted leader bent—  
    Dismounting there, by rugged paths of stone  
The toiling band o'ercame the steep descent—  
    Fronting, they found a cave, with brake o'ergrown,  
    That seem'd or long neglected or unknown ;       851  
“ Behold your road and dare without delay ;  
“ Short time ago I trod the path alone.”—  
Through bush and brake the party forc'd their way,  
The craggy portal gain'd, and left the light of day. 855

## 22.

Their Chieftain held the torch; long aisles of gloom,  
Cautious, yet swift, they pierc'd; where reign'd around  
The silence and the chillness of the tomb—  
The cavern ends—but spiral steps they found,  
That, flank'd by massive walls, ascending wound :  
“ Are ye prepar'd ?—The destin'd scene is near.” 861  
Nor long ere, from above, a distant sound  
Confirm'd his words—with shrinking hearts they hear  
Faint cries of distant woe, and shrieks of female fear.

## 23.

“ On—or too late,”—from hapless Azza's bower 865  
Arose the piercing clamour of distress—  
Assembled there, but in no festive hour,  
Throng'd all the harem's pride and loveliness—  
Victims forewarn'd, that round their mistress press :  
Calm in despair the sister maids were seen, 870  
Doom'd like the others, but bewilder'd less—  
In prayer they knelt—with pale but constant mien,  
Majestic in their woe, and in their fears serene.



## 24.

The doors are burst—the dark assassin train,

Who scarcely gave the promis'd time for prayer, 875  
Advanc'd to strike!—An instant—and in vain

The near assistance that the victors bear.

Round the first victim's wildly streaming hair  
That savage hand its dusky grasp has twin'd :

The lifted steel—Oh ! moment of despair— 880  
When, bursting through the yawning wall behind,  
Rush'd in with furious shout the aid by Heaven design'd.

## 25.

Th' assassins soon became the sacrifice,

Struck down, and welt'ring on the marble floor.

The rescued victims scarcely raised their eyes, 885

Perhaps severely saved to suffer more.

Back from pursuit, the act of vengeance o'er,  
Caled return'd, and sought Abdallagh's child ;

Distain'd his vest, his sabre dropping gore,  
Fire darting from his eyes and features wild, 890  
Some lion loos'd he seemed, with recent prey defil'd.

## 26.

That sight might well each rising hope confound :  
Terror beheld the master-savage near :  
A trembling crowd the princely twain surround,  
In all the anxious helplessness of fear. — 895  
“ We come to save—as woman’s guardians, here—  
“ Azza, thy shield :”—but onward as he came,  
A voice, a murmur, burst upon his ear,  
That thrill’d through ev’ry fibre of his frame :  
A well-known voice it was, and breath’d his rightful  
name. 900

## 27.

Forwards he sprang.—Why starts the victor now ?  
Now motionless, as if by magic stay’d ?  
Why sits a death-like paleness on his brow ?  
Why thundering falls his all-ungovern’d blade !  
Her, her, he sees, his own, his long lost maid ! 905  
It was herself, that living form of light,  
Her drooping head on Azza’s bosom laid ;  
Each sense subdued beneath the keen delight  
That tried Elmyra’s heart when Caled blest her sight.

## NOTES.

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*Line 2. “ Kist Balbec’s walls.”*

At the time that the Author was at Balbec, the *brother* of the then reigning Chief had taken refuge in the adjacent mountains, and used to descend with his followers in the night and ravage the plain : he had been able to maintain himself in his fastness and carry on his predatory warfare for two or three years, and his subjection did not seem to be expected.—To this circumstance ILDERIM owes his birth.

42. “ *Distinct, its giant leaf banana spread.*”

The Banana is the *Musa Sapientum* of botanists ; a species of plantain, distinct from the bread-fruit tree. It bears a delicious fruit, and its leaves are of immense size.

43. “ *Waving in air, like Mecca’s flag unroll’d.*”

This flag is of green, which is the sacred colour.

92. “ *Then, when the harem was rever’d no more.*”

In times of even the greatest disorder and violence, the harem has, almost universally, been respected. An exception, however, to this general rule took place at Cairo in 1811, on the occasion of the treacherous massacre of the Mamlukes, at the command of Mehmed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt. This outrage was long talked of, and severely reprobated, in a part of the world where the *massacre* was scarcely considered a crime.

185. “ *The name of Ilderim.*”

Ilderim, in Turkish, means the lightning. It was a surname given to Bajazet, on account of the rapidity of his military operations; and is here given to the robber for much the same reason.

271. “ *The tether’d steeds.*”

The Arab does not “stable his steed,” but tethers him to his spear, which he fixes in the ground.

462. “ *It seem’d a lake.*”

In many parts of Turkey we observed this resemblance. The plains often extended on one level up to the base of

the hills : the hills rose abruptly, often jutting out in promontories, or retiring in bays ; so that the eye, glancing uninterruptedly over the unenclosed expanse, beheld a flat surface, like that of still water, apparently surrounded by shores.

512. “ *That ruin'd pile.*

The ruins of the magnificent temples of Balbec domineer so proudly over the modern city, that the one seems to be the work of giants, and the other of pigmies. The Syrians, unable to account for the construction of such stupendous edifices by natural means, ascribe them to the Genii who worked under the orders of King Solomon.

600. “ *He drew a rosary.*”

The Catholic associations usually conjured up by this word, will, perhaps, make it appear to be improperly used here : but it must be remembered, that the Turks are universal tellers of beads, and that a string of beads (for which there is no English name but rosary) forms, in that country, a part of every man's dress.

602. “ *Strange to behold a robber use at prayer.*”

The Turkish nation are more outwardly devout than any other. Whatever a Turk does in private, he prays in

public ; kneeling down on his portable carpet in the market-place, and the highway. This mere act of devotion would not appear extraordinary in Ilderim ; not to mention that his particular way of life is by no means considered disgraceful in Turkey, where it is perfectly compatible to be a great robber, and a good Mussulman.

827. “ *Azrael.*”

The angel of death.

# PHROSYNE.

A GRECIAN TALE





## PHROSYNE.

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### CANTO I.

---

THRON'D on a height, above th' Albanian lands,  
The Grecian city, Callirete, stands—  
Parent of hardy sons! who long withstood  
The rushing progress of the Othman flood;  
And still, protected by their rocks, retain 5  
Blessings unknown to Grecians of the plain.  
No turban'd soldier, with insulting frown,  
Stalks through the streets, or awes the trembling town!  
Respected still th' unviolated right,  
Grecians alone possess the Grecian height. 10

Yearly the youthful of that hardy stock,  
At Summer's call, desert their native rock ;  
Traders, or sailors, o'er the neighb'ring wave  
They venture, and for gain the danger brave.  
Hence darksome Winter is their hour of cheer— 15  
For when rejoicing Nature decks the year,  
Then the lone city, like a widow, stands  
Mourning her sons dispers'd in distant lands ;  
Th' exhausted elders, and the female train,  
Sad, if courageous, on the height remain. 20  
But, when stern Winter riots unconfin'd,  
Unleafs the forest, and unchains the wind,  
Then, as the feather'd tribes that (ever true)  
Their homeward flight at certain times renew,  
The roving youth, ascending from the west, 25  
In jovial troops regain their craggy nest.

In that wild nest, within those rocks entomb'd,  
A lovely maid, the young Phrosyne, bloom'd—

Last of a gen'rous race—the fairest flow'r  
Of Beauty's wreath in Beauty's native bow'r. 30  
In other days her faultless form had been  
The sculptor's model for the Cyprian Queen :  
E'en now, when, sportive round, the mountain air  
Fann'd the loose tresses of her auburn hair,  
Wak'd on her roseate cheeks a brighter hue, 35  
And added lustre to her eyes of blue—  
E'en pausing Age a look of wonder cast,  
Stood still to gaze, and bless'd her as she past.

Gentle as fair, Phrosyne soon was sought,  
And rival Greeks their ardent homage brought. 40  
But equal worth alone had power to move,  
And only Demo taught her heart to love—  
Son of a primate, who remain'd at home,  
And yearly sent the stripling forth to roam.  
His summers oft the youth abroad had spent, 45  
But still return'd as faithful as he went.

“ One voyage more ”—so Demo’s sire decreed,—  
“ And then shall marriage be thy joyful meed.”  
This sentence issued, (as each brighter day  
Now show’d that Demo had not long to stay,) 50  
With pomp and chorus, in their kindred’s sight,  
The lovers met, their mutual troth to plight !  
A tender link, in absence to sustain,  
But one that brought its own peculiar pain ;  
For\* Grecians, once affianc’d, meet no more 55  
Till Hymen comes, and all restraint is o’er.—  
United thus, and thus disjoin’d, the pair—  
In future prospects sought relief from care—

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\* This custom is still kept up in many parts of Greece. It seems to have been adopted from the Turks, who carry the absurdity still further, and never behold the faces of their wives before the marriage day. The previous negotiations are carried on by the female relations on either side. The Christians of Egypt, and of the Asiatic part of the Turkish empire, have completely adopted the manners of their masters ; but the Greeks of Turkey in Europe restrict the interdict to the interval between affiancement and marriage.

Fix'd their fond eyes on winter's distant hour,  
And drest in thought the hymeneal bower. 60

And now the day arriv'd when mirth and sport  
In Callirete held their noisy court.  
The feast it was that hail'd the birth of Spring,  
And urged the manly band their flight to wing.  
These vernal games, on each succeeding year, 65  
Turn'd into smiles the maidens' starting tear ;  
And cheer'd the youth, and sent them on their way  
With omens blissful, and with bosoms gay.

Warn'd by the hour the festive Greeks unite,  
And fill the garnish'd forum of the height. 70  
All present there but Demo—he (denied  
By laws severe to meet his plighted bride)  
Abstain'd that fair Phrosyne might appear,  
Nor of its brightest garland rob the year.  
Full soon, beneath the trees, the virgin band, 75  
In wonted dance advancing, join'd the hand :

The youths, divided from the fair, apart  
Trode the same maze, but wanted all the art.  
Met in a solemn knot the archons sate,  
And o'er the pipe prolong'd the grave debate ;      80  
The matron train, loquacious in their glee,  
Range in a line, to gossip and to see ;  
Th' ignobler crowd are scatter'd o'er the ground ;  
And, join'd in troops, the children sport around—  
Smiles all the scene, and gives to Fancy's eye      85  
One glimpse of ancient Greece and Liberty.

Sudden, a distant drum assails their ears !  
The dance breaks off, and all the city fears !  
What hostile foot invades the hallow'd ground ?  
Why ring the rocks with War's unfriendly sound ?      90  
In swarms the female bands together press,  
Expecting thus to make the danger less.  
Start forth the youth—and rush to seize their arms,  
Or view, and watch, the cause of their alarms :  
But swift the foremost, with astonish'd eye,      95  
The train approaching up the heights, descry

A lengthen'd band, with cautious steps and slow,  
In files advancing o'er the path below.  
No stragglers these, no plund'rer's roving horde—  
These the firm squadrons of Albania's lord! 100  
By the white vest and crimson cap (the sign  
Of waste and woe) they know th' Albanian line.  
Fear came on all—nor lessen'd as they saw  
The flying standard of the fam'd bashaw.  
“ Comes he himself? what seeks the tyrant now?” 105  
“ Comes he himself to lay our city low?”  
Nor long the doubt—for now appear'd in sight  
A troop, with flowing robes and turbans white :  
One in the centre rode, whose glitt'ring vest  
And glitt'ring arms his peerless rank confest— 110  
'Tis Ali's self! and swift throughout the town  
The fatal tidings, big with woe, are known.

Oh! other thoughts in warlike bosoms swell'd,  
When Greeks of yore the turban'd ranks beheld—  
When joy, predicting conquest, fiercely glanc'd 115  
From ev'ry eye, as Asia's sons advanc'd!

Then Marathon—ah ! thoughtless Muse, refrain ;  
Check the fond boast, and hush th' aspiring strain :  
Freedom has perish'd ! rung is glory's knell,  
And Hector's spirit is appeas'd too well. 120

But sudden, spurring on before the rest,  
A single horseman sought the mountain's crest :  
He comes ! and thus imparts a quick relief,  
With grateful words the message of the chief—  
“ Let not a breast in Callirete fear ; 125  
“ Ali, his people's friend, advances near.  
“ Returning from the war, his vengeance led  
“ To hurl destruction on a rival's head :  
“ Curious himself this wondrous height to view,  
“ Tow'rd's Callirete's mountain throne he drew, 130  
“ This night he passes here—the dawn of day  
“ Conducts his progress on its homeward way.”

The grateful words dispel the gen'ral dread,  
Still ev'ry heart, and raise each drooping head :



And now the crowd bend low—each hand has prest, 135  
In due salute, the forehead and the breast :  
For, girt with many a chief, in princely state,  
Albania's lord has reach'd the city's gate.  
Ali, with gracious mien and specious art,  
That feign'd a virtue foreign to the heart, 140  
Smil'd on the crowd—for well he knew to win  
With angel-looks, and hide the fiend within.  
Thy heart had sworn him fealty, hadst thou seen  
His figure mild, and venerable mien !  
His snowy beard beneath his bosom fell, 145  
And proved the years his port dissembled well ;  
His eye shed mercy—and his tranquil air  
Diffus'd around the peace he seem'd to share.  
But all was false—for all conceal'd within  
A heart by passion torn, and clogg'd by sin : 150  
Relentless cruelty, and fitful rage,  
And savage lust amidst the frost of age.  
Selfish ambition, thirst of lawless gain,  
And craft perfidious, o'er his bosom reign :

Dreadful his smile ! it sparkles but to hide 155  
The purpose dark, and augurs ruin wide.

The tyrant, follow'd by the crowd, ascends  
The rising street, and tow'rds the summit bends :  
Archons and primates guide him o'er the height,  
Walk by his side, and feign a forc'd delight. 160  
Ali, with gracious words, observ'd, inquir'd ;  
The curious town, the beauteous scene admir'd—  
Admir'd the gallant youths, their manly grace,  
And prais'd the hated virtues of the race.  
At length, approach'd the near Bazar, he sees 165  
The lyres, the garlands, cast beneath the trees :  
The meaning ask'd, the archons near relate  
The chequer'd day's short history and fate.  
The tyrant griev'd the merry sports had ceas'd,  
And bade the youths at once renew the feast : 170  
Himself would see the games—himself preside,  
And with his sons their grateful joys divide.

The kind commands the Greeks astonish'd hear,  
(Commands that seldom meet a Raya's ear,)  
And swift, for once obsequious from the heart, 175  
To call the nymphs, and form the choir, depart :  
Swift crowd, united in the gay Bazar,  
The sons of Pleasure, and the sons of War.  
The active guard, beneath the fountain's side,  
(Where a broad oak a grateful shade supplied,) 180  
The carpet spread, the silken cushions plac'd,  
And rais'd the downy throne of Eastern taste.  
On the rude sofa, carelessly repos'd,  
Ali reclines, by watchful crowds enclos'd ;  
The archons, kneeling near the couch, receive 185  
The poor distinction tyrants choose to give ;  
Around, the silent guards submissive stand,  
And watch their master's eye, that looks command.  
The dance begins beneath the spreading Plane,  
The youth their festive measures lead again : 190  
Ali, with careless eyes, and thoughts that stray'd,  
Pensive and silent long, the scene survey'd ;

Oft the rich pipe he presses to his lips—  
Oft from the golden cup, the coffee sips :  
The thoughtless crowd the precious cup admire, 195  
That, bright with rubies, sheds a purple fire ;  
Nor knew for this was lost their country's peace—  
Ill-gotten gems ; the blood and tears of Greece !

At length, Phrosyne's turn is come—to lead  
Her sister-nymphs, and in the maze precede : 200  
To deck her charms, attentive Art had brought  
Each little aid that eastern fancy taught.  
Her flowing dress the classic robe belied—  
Still Grecian beauty's undiscarded pride :  
The silken folds, that modestly conceal'd 205  
Her form, each graceful motion well reveal'd ;  
Around that form the Cashmire shawl entwin'd,  
And silver clasps the flowing robe confin'd ;  
Amidst her locks, arrang'd in many a braid,  
The bright sequins in wonted splendour play'd— 210

Row above row, her polish'd brow they crown'd,  
And o'er her neck in golden circles wound.  
In view she stands, and on that lovely face  
Soft blushes spread that heighten every grace :  
Fearful, yet pleased, to meet the dreaded glance 215  
Of Ali's eye, she trembled to advance.  
At length, the timid maid begins her part  
With trembling footsteps and a beating heart,  
Till, gaining force, she feels her bosom swell,  
Feels all a woman's study to excel. 220  
With arms that float, and feet that smoothly glide,  
She moves along in slow majestic pride,  
And leads the nymphs, and bids the virgin choir  
Softly advance, or gracefully retire.  
Ali, when first Phrosyne met his view, 225  
Had mark'd her charms, and all observant grew ;  
Now he believ'd some Houri, heav'nly fair,  
Had left the skies, and led the measure there.  
Awaken'd passion fills the breast of age—  
Passion that burns, and fires that fiercely rage : 230

Yet, still dissembling—still the tyrant wore  
The calm indiff<sup>r</sup>ence he preserv'd before,  
And watch'd, with tranquil eye, Phrosyne's way—  
As from his lair the lion marks his prey.

The quicken'd music breathes a gayer sound— 235  
With quicken'd steps Phrosyne strikes the ground.  
The zone extending to the nymph she leads—  
She twines around it as the dance proceeds :  
Yet quicker now—and quicker still, repeats  
The circling course—flies forward, and retreats— 240  
Glances like light, irregular with skill—  
Seems lost, enraptur'd—and is graceful still :  
Till from the lyres the gayest strain ascends,  
And the quick dance in hurried movements ends.  
Hush'd is the strain—Phrosyne's vow is crown'd. 245  
The praise she sought the beauteous victim found.  
Curs'd with her granted wish ; her charms admir'd  
By him, whose smile the ill-starr'd girl desir'd.

A wild rebellion throbs in Ali's breast,  
With pain conceal'd, and by no curb repress :      250  
Love is not his—to so accurst a flame  
'Twere impious e'er to give so fair a name :  
His the fierce rush of Passion's lawless tide—  
With such a love the tiger woos his bride.

Yet, veiling all with calm, unalter'd mien—      255  
His heart all tumult, and his look serene,  
The tyrant, mildly, bade the maid advance ;  
Himself would give his tribute to the dance.  
Trembling she came—the tyrant prais'd her grace—  
Inquir'd her name, her fortunes, and her race :      260  
All soon collecting from the maid's reply,  
Or from th' officious archons standing by,  
“ 'Tis well ! ” he said, and seem'd content, the while  
Bestow'd his gold—then added with a smile—  
“ Daughter ! thy modest worth has touch'd my breast ;  
“ Nor here shall Ali's waken'd favour rest.      266

“ Whene’er the nuptial knot is duly tied  
“ That makes Phrosyne Demo’s lovely bride,  
“ From Ali’s hands (thy second father now)  
“ Richly the portion of the bride shall flow.” 270

The Grecians round with smiles and shouts approv’d  
Their lord’s protection of the maid they lov’d :  
Phrosyne, blushing, fails to speak—and bends  
To kiss the hand the gracious chief extends.  
Swift flock’d around the Calliretian fair— 275  
These shar’d the joy, and these appear’d to share ;  
The matron train high praises lavish’d forth,  
And, loud and shrill, exalted Ali’s worth ;  
The crowd forgot that Ali e’er oppress’d,  
And, us’d to execrate, consenting, blest. 280  
By one bright action great delinquents win  
More praise than saints by lives exempt from sin.

Thus joy prevail’d—but him, whom hundreds bless’d,  
Far diff’ring thoughts and other cares possess’d.



Night fell, and slumber hush'd the peaceful height; 285  
But Ali wak'd—and, through the length of night,  
Watch'd o'er the happy to resolve their woe,  
And held the dagger, and prepar'd the blow.  
At that still moment, awful to the good,  
Guilt stood reveal'd in open hardihood : 290  
Livid his cheek, and loose his ruffled beard,  
(Those silver hairs that should have been rever'd,)  
Each wither'd feature stamp'd with fierce desire,  
His pale eye brighten'd with unhallow'd fire ;  
Unseen, the tyrant pac'd the guarded room, 295  
And shap'd in thought Phrosyne's future doom.—  
But, ere a counsel had occur'd that pleas'd,  
Or sleep the tempest of his soul appeas'd,  
The morning broke—and, at its warning ray,  
Pour'd forth the squadrons to resume their way. 300

Full soon, with all his Agas at his side,  
Rode Ali forth, in oriental pride :

Calm was his air, nor on his peaceful mien  
One vestige of the nightly storm was seen.  
The Grecians lin'd the street ; amongst the crowd 305  
Phrosyne, there, with grateful homage bow'd,  
A look benign th' observant Chieftain cast,  
“ Depend on Ali's word ! ” he said, and past ;  
Then slow advanc'd, and, midst his glittering throng,  
To seek the distant valleys mov'd along. 310

The Grecian crowd his onward way pursu'd,  
In wonder lost, and lost in gratitude,  
Till distant far the train had left the height,  
And closing mountains veil'd them from the sight.

## PHROSYNE.

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### CANTO II.

---

ERE long the Grecian city was forlorn, 315  
Her sons departing with the vernal morn.  
All, all was gone that sad Phrosyne lov'd—  
And constant tears her faithful anguish prov'd.  
The mother saw the daughter's sorrows flow,  
And pitied still, but half-reprov'd, the woe : 320  
Hardy of soul, and worthy of her race,  
Regarding weakness as the mind's disgrace,  
Woman herself, she scorn'd a woman's part—  
Though, here, affection half-subdu'd her heart.

“ Banish thy grief!” exclaim’d the lofty dame— 325  
“ Nor, once thy mother’s pride, become her shame :  
“ A loss like ours each maid and matron feel,  
“ But they or vanquish sorrow, or conceal.  
“ Ah! lov’d Phrosyne! thus in grief again!  
“ Are we then dastard Rayas of the plain? 330  
“ No, Callirete’s daughters—born to bear  
“ With nobler courage, and to mock despair.  
“ Cease, best-lov’d child! thy Demo shall return  
“ When the hearth blazes, and the myrtles burn :  
“ Then shall the marriage train, the priest, attend, 335  
“ And Ali’s promise, like a shower, descend.  
“ Oh! weep not thus—thy sorrows drag to day  
“ Feelings it shames thy parent to betray.”

So spake the dame, loquacious from her years—  
Stoic in speech—the mother in her tears. 340  
Phrosyne, pale with overflowing eyes,  
Instead of accents, gave responsive sighs ;  
E’en Helen’s smiles (for soon Phrosyne’s bow’r  
Did Helen seek) had lost their cheering power ;

Though, best-belov'd, the chosen maid possess      345  
A sister's empire o'er Phrosyne's breast.

Sad from that day the love-lorn girl remain'd—  
On Demo ponder'd, and to Heav'n complain'd.  
Did the wind rise in harsher gusts around ?  
How throb'd Phrosyne's bosom at the sound!      350  
Chance did she hear of robbers, or the tale  
Of some rock-splinter'd bark, her cheek was pale.  
Ne'er did she join the dance beneath the Plane,  
Nor youthful frolic with the virgin train ;  
But, if she mov'd, alone with Helen stray'd,      355  
And sought the secret rill—the deepest glade ;  
Her eyes still resting on the zone she wore,  
That Demo sent—allow'd to meet no more.

The sun was bright—the season in its pride—  
Daphne\* was red on ev'ry streamlet's side ;      360

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\* Daphne is the Romaic name for the oleander, which fringes the rivers and streams of Greece,

All nature smil'd—the air itself was gay,  
And warbling birds sang homage to the day :  
Pensive Phrosyne sat—and “ Oh, thou sun,  
“ Haste thee,” she cried, “ thy onward course to run.  
“ Cease tedious Summer ! cease thy loath'd delay—  
“ Swift with thy gaudy pageants, haste away !      366  
“ These flow'ry wreaths but on my soul impress  
“ How distant still from me is happiness !  
“ Hence, idle train !—and, oh ! thou kinder pow'r,  
“ Storm-gathering Winter ! bring thy darksome hour :  
“ More grateful far thy roughest blast shall sound 371  
“ Than this soft air that gently steals around ;  
“ Thy leafless groves a fairer sight appear  
“ Than the green canopy that shades me here ;  
“ Brighter thy gloomy skies than yonder glow      375  
“ That decks, with living gold, the vale below !  
“ Haste, Winter !—haste—thy snows I long to see,  
“ For love, triumphant love, returns with thee !”

So sigh'd the faithful maid, and, ending, sought  
Her mountain home, oppress'd and lost in thought. 380

At length the shades descended on the steep,  
And sad Phrosyne wept herself to sleep.  
But when the rising sun restor'd the day,  
Up rose the maiden, as the morning gay.  
Pleas'd, the fond mother saw the smile that grac'd 385  
Her darling's cheek, and Sorrow's print effac'd.  
“ Oh, most belov'd!” the gladden'd daughter cried,  
“ The saints have watch'd at thy Phrosyne's side :  
“ Hear and believe me—scarce had kind repose  
“ Suspended grief, and taught my eyes to close, 390  
“ Or ere before me Demo seem'd to stand,  
“ And look'd all tenderness, and seiz'd my hand.  
“ ‘ Endure,’ he cried, ‘ the transitory pain,  
“ ‘ We meet for ever, when we meet again !’  
“ He spoke ; my bosom throb'd with keen delight, 395  
“ But sleep escap'd, and Demo left my sight.  
“ Still I exult—assur'd the future hour  
“ Will verify the visions of my bow'r.”  
The happy parent bless'd the omen given,  
And felt convinc'd the message came from Heav'n: 400

Her vows were heard—before the Virgin's shrine  
She thought it meet another lamp should shine.  
To schemes of bliss prospective fancy led,  
And Hope o'er all her rainbow colours shed.

Thus they rejoic'd—when from the court below 405  
Sudden unwonted clamours seem'd to flow :  
Loud knocking shook the gate—the noisy din  
Spreads from the portal, and resounds within.  
Startled and pale, the mother and the maid  
Lost speech and smiles, astonish'd and afraid : 410  
The vision all forgot—the icy chill  
Of sudden fear succeeds to pleasure's thrill.  
List'ning they stand—at length “Some village jest ;”  
The dauntless parent cried—“compose thy breast ;  
“Did ever danger reach the mountain's head ? 415  
“Idle the thought, and weak our woman's dread ;  
“Some truant boy, or Helen ;”—and the dame,  
Gaining the portal whence the tumult came,



Threw wide the open'd door—with wild surprise  
She started from the sight that met her eyes. 420  
A fierce Albanian band the gate surround—  
Foremost the chief who caus'd th' unfriendly sound :  
Their sabres glitter in the sunny beam,  
And fiercer flashes from their eye-balls gleam.  
“ From Ali we!”—the benefactor's name 425  
Lessen'd the dread that shook the mother's frame :  
The maid had fled, though far she could not fly—  
Uncertain what of good or ill was nigh.

At length the matron, “ Friends! (for Ali's name  
“ Bespeaks ye friends) your master's will proclaim. 430  
“ Doubtless ye come, at mighty Ali's word,  
“ (Eternal blessings crown our gracious lord!)  
“ To learn if yet Phrosyne's bridal hour  
“ Asks his rich promise for the bridal bow'r.”  
The matron spoke—but falt'ring voice betray'd, 435  
Though firm the speech, the bosom all dismay'd.

No word return'd the leader of the host,  
But, silent, with his band the threshold crost ;  
The look malignant, and the eye-brow bent,  
Spoke the fix'd purpose and the dark intent. 440  
Fear chill'd the mother's breast—yet oft she tried  
To grasp the hopes that memory supplied :  
Ali had smil'd—the savage soldier's mood  
Is rough and hateful—but the prince is good.  
Her anxious look the mingled feeling spoke : 445  
When thus the leader's voice the silence broke—  
“ The gracious Ali still preserves a mind  
“ Unchang'd to thee—and to thy daughter kind :  
“ For thy Phrosyne's sake he sent us here ;  
“ He means you all to prosper—cease to fear.” 450

“ Blest are thy words !” the parent cried, “ and blest  
“ The child through whom such favour is possest !”

“ So much of favour is thy daughter's share,  
“ That none retain so much of Ali's care.

“ Our mighty prince resolves to gild her days,      455  
“ And humble merit from its bed to raise.  
“ But one so fair, who thus his soul can move,  
“ He deems too precious for a vulgar love :  
“ In brighter scenes he bids her name be known—  
“ And for a Raya’s love, he gives—his own.      460  
“ That gift Phrosyne cannot choose but take,  
“ Accept the palace and the cot forsake.  
“ To our protection, then, the maid consign—  
“ Bliss will be hers, and riches shall be thine.”

With piercing look th’ indignant parent stood,      465  
And heard the dark demand that chill’d her blood.  
A soul of dauntless force disdain’d to show  
The start of horror or the tear of woe :  
High indignation master’d pow’rful grief,  
And thus, in troubled accents, gain’d relief—      470  
“ Base-hearted engine of a tyrant’s throne !  
“ Is this thy message ?—this the mercy shown ?—

- “ Thus does thy lord preserve the oath he swears?—  
“ Are these his blessings—his paternal cares?  
“ Dissembling tyrant!—oh! how calm the smile 475  
“ That veil’d the demon’s thought—the demon’s guile!  
“ Fool that I was to trust the flatt’ring show,  
“ And pray for him who only sought our woe!  
“ What! did he think the Calliretian race  
“ Are won by gold—consenting to be base? 480  
“ Thought he the maid would listen to his vow,  
“ Nor give her answer—as I answer now?  
“ Let Ali seek the Rayas of the plain,  
“ They or resist not, or resist—in vain.  
“ We, whom these heights protect, (the rocky hill 485  
“ Shall prove, I trust, a faithful fortress still,)  
“ From ampler freedom nobler maxims gain,  
“ And scorn to live—except in Virtue’s train.  
“ Go! tell thy master nought his princedom’s yield  
“ Can touch the breast by Virtue’s spirit steel’d. 490  
“ Dear as I hold my child, these doating eyes  
“ Would rather weep a daughter’s obsequies ;

“ Would rather view her breathless at my feet,  
“ Than proudly borne disgrace and crime to meet !”

She said—a smile of malice and of pride 495  
Reveal’d th’ intent the soldier scorn’d to hide :  
Then fiercely thus—“ Thou talk’st it nobly, dame !  
“ Pity thy strength and will are not the same !  
“ I fear me much nor virtue’s boasted aid,  
“ Nor e’en thy mountain, will defend the maid. 500  
“ Mistaken Christian ! hast thou still to learn  
“ We came not unrewarded to return ?  
“ Think’st thou we fail’d to watch th’ appointed hour  
“ When nought could stand, or baffle, Ali’s pow’r ?  
“ Thou dream’st of strength, unaided and alone— 505  
“ Perchance forgetful that thy guards are gone !  
“ We watch’d the rovers ere we journey’d here ;  
“ We knew nor sire, nor Demo, now was near.  
“ Where then remains thy hope ?—presuming slave !  
“ Unheard by Rayas shall our master crave ? 510

“ Know, desp’rate woman ! if persuasion fail,  
“ Triumphant force shall aid us, and prevail.”

The fatal truth, now openly confest,  
Pierc’d, like a dagger’s point, the matron’s breast ;  
At once she saw the art—at once perceiv’d 515  
Her child a victim—and of help bereav’d.  
Courage and pride, subdu’d in agony,  
No more confirm’d her soul and arm’d her eye !  
But sorrow gush’d—and forth the suppliant pour’d  
Her anxious pray’r, and pity thus implor’d :— 520

“ Thou wear’st the human form ! if e’er thy breast  
“ Was touch’d by mercy, hear despair’s request !  
“ Tam’d is my pride—for, oh ! too well is laid  
“ The artful plot to catch a fated maid.  
“ No aid is near—but, oh ! in mercy lend 525  
“ This small assistance, and thus far befriend—  
“ Speed thee to Ali ! tell him all we own,  
“ The fruit of years, shall fall before his throne.

“ This town, (for well I know, to save the maid,  
“ All Callirete’s race will lend their aid,) 530  
“ This town its little wealth shall freely drain,  
“ And bring a ransom kings might not disdain.  
“ All shall be his—such gifts have oft inclin’d  
“ Our Turkish lords to ponder and be kind:  
“ Oh! tell him this—and haply will he spare 535  
“ An only child, and earn a mother’s pray’r.”

“ Woman! in vain thy treasures are unroll’d;  
“ Our master wills thy daughter—not thy gold!  
“ His servants stir not hence without their prey;  
“ Seize her!” exclaim’d the ruffian—“ and away!” 540  
“ Not yet, not yet!”—the frantic parent cried,  
Whilst, as she might, to check his course she tried.  
“ If tears, nor pray’rs, nor gold may fate repel,  
“ Grant but the time to take—a last farewell!  
“ No help is nigh—no rescue need ye fear; 545  
“ One hour allow me! then receive her here.”

“ Agreed !” replied the soldier, “ at thy gate  
“ We, for an hour, thy daughter will await.  
“ Peace we prefer and quiet means ; to force  
“ We but appeal as our extreme resource.” 550

By this, (for boldly, as they reach'd the town,  
The savage band had made their errand known,)  
By this the fatal news had widely spread,  
And Callirete shook with grief and dread.  
As yet, no tyrant hand had e'er profan'd 555  
The sacred height—by insult yet unstain'd.  
“ Is it then true ?” each fearful mother prest  
Her trembling daughter to her anxious breast !  
“ Who shall be safe if this be not withstood ?  
“ What stays the tiger that has tasted blood ?” 560  
The streets are fill'd—the swift-collecting throng,  
By one instinctive impulse spurr'd along,  
Rush to Phrosyne's home—a feeble band !  
Woman and age—the weakness of the land.



With scorn the soldiers saw the crowd appear— 565  
None present there to wake a soldier's fear :  
Loud was the wailing—but the mournful sound  
No echo in the Turkish bosom found.  
The crowd beheld the strangers at their post,  
And saw the truth, and saw that all was lost : 570  
One shriek they gave—one cry of wild despair ;  
Then stood aghast, to marble stiffen'd there.  
As when the storm has dashed upon the rock  
Some sinking vessel, shatter'd by the shock ;  
No succour near—in sight no friendly land— 575  
Bereft of hope the helpless victims stand ;  
See death advancing on the billowy wave,  
And mark, in dumb despair, their future grave :  
No less bereft, no less undone, a crew,  
The Grecians stood, with ruin in their view. 580  
Now groans, before in speechless horror pent,  
Burst loudly forth, and beards were rudely rent ;  
“ Why are our nerves unstrung ? ” the elders cried,  
And curs'd their years that martial strength denied ;

“ Where are our sons? our sons had struggled well  
“ The maid to save, and outrage to repel : 586  
“ But they are distant, and our aged eyes  
“ Must witness here the ruthless sacrifice!”  
The female band in cries their grief declare,  
Or loud reproaches, wasted on the air ; 590  
Restless from pain they hurried to and fro,  
And all was tumult, noise, and frantic woe.

A foremost group, the kindred of the maid,  
Press'd to the door—besought, and wept, and pray'd :  
“ We bring no help!” exclaim'd the suppliant train;  
“ One last sad look!—'tis all we seek to gain.” 596

The chieftain paus'd—“The precious boon ye crave  
“ To one distracted girl our pity gave ;  
“ Half wild she seem'd—with cries the air she rent,  
“ That stunn'd our ears, and forc'd us to consent : 600  
“ But ye have gold our mercy to repay—  
“ Your tears alone shall never force the way!”

The gold was found—for each surrounding hand  
Some aid supplied, and met the chief's demand :  
The bribe unbarr'd the door—the sight of gain      605  
Subdu'd the breast that mercy prob'd in vain.

Arriv'd within, the kindred band survey'd,  
With shrinking hearts, the havoc grief had made :  
Here, pleasure sparkled in the morning's eye,  
But ruin came or ere the sun was high!      610  
Silent the court where late the chorus swell'd—  
Where late the glad affiance they beheld :  
No bridegroom there! the desolating blow  
Had struck.—and all was laid for ever low!

Scarcely observant of th' approaching train,      615  
Engross'd by grief, and occupied by pain,  
The parent stood—and, with unalter'd eye,  
Gaz'd on her child in silent agony!  
Clasp'd were her hands, and loose her streaming hair;  
Her lips, that spoke not, seem'd to move in pray'r :

But not a groan her inward woe exprest, 621  
And not a tear reliev'd the bursting breast.

Sustain'd in Helen's arms—of things around  
Conscious no more—the fated maid they found;  
Clos'd were her eyes, and from their native bed 625  
The wither'd roses seem'd for ever fled.  
So pale the lips—so still the breast of snow,  
The kindred thought that death had dealt his blow.  
But tears at length, and broken murmurs, came—  
And last, in half-form'd whispers, Demo's name. 630

Such had Phrosyne been, since first her fears  
Had learnt conviction from a mother's tears.  
A random word, her distant ear had caught,  
Had rais'd suspicion in the victim's thought:  
And, when the parent came—the grief exprest 635  
In ev'ry look and gesture told the rest.

Silent, at first, the mournful group remain'd,  
Of speech bereft—for grief their words restrain'd.  
At length the sobs of anguish fill'd the air,  
And groans and shrieks—the language of despair. 640  
But soon a voice, in loud and haughty tone,  
Call'd fiercely from without—"The hour is gone!"  
The sound was thunder—waken'd from her trance,  
The mother cast around a frenzied glance;—  
"Save me!" Phrosyne cried, and rais'd her head—  
Recall'd to life by agony and dread; 646  
Whilst from her eyes shot forth a wild dismay,  
As if a father's ghost had cross'd her way.  
"Save thee, my child!" the parent murmur'd, "lost!"  
"Oh, lost!"—then paus'd, as if a thought had cross'd—  
A fearful thought! for wild her look became; 651  
Quiver'd her lips, and shook her trembling frame.  
"One way alone!" nor more—the friends around  
Caught the deep meaning in th' unfinish'd sound.  
Silent as death they stood—no words were past, 655  
But hurried glances ominously cast;

Each fear'd, yet sought, upon the other's face  
Her own conceal'd idea stamp'd to trace :  
The glances met —and each wild-flashing eye  
Spoke the one mind, and gave the dread reply. 660  
Sudden the mother loos'd the daughter's hand,  
Admonish'd with a look the kindred band,  
Utter'd one groan—then scarce had voice to say,  
“ I cannot *see* her die!” and rush'd away.

At this the maid, acquainted with the thought, 665  
At once the purpose and its object caught :  
And starting up, and unsubdu'd, alone,  
Unfasten'd, from her waist, the silken zone —  
Instant the friends surround—in darkness hide  
To what sad use the zone they then applied ! 670  
Back they retreat, disclosing, as they stand,  
The prostrate victim, snatch'd from Ali's hand.

And now the guard without, impatient grown,  
Repeated loud—“ The hour we gave is gone !

“ Bring forth the tardy damsel, or the fort 675

“ We storm at once, and cut the parting short.”

“ She comes !” the females cried—“ assuag’d her woe,

“ She comes—now tranquil and prepar’d to go !”

They said—and swift compos’d, with pious care,

The lifeless limbs—compos’d the streaming hair ; 680

Then rais’d the tragic load ! six maidens bore

The breathless maid—their joy and pride before ;

Helen precedes ; the rest on either side,

In solemn order duly rang’d, divide.

They reach’d the portal—Helen wav’d her hand,

“ Receive,” she cried, “ the treasure ye demand ; 686

“ Phrosyne comes !”—at this th’ exulting foe

Drew near, and savage jests began to flow—

Insult and triumph !—soon the gladsome strain

Was chang’d to wonder, when appear’d the train. 690

Slow the procession mov’d—nor tear, nor sigh

Disturb’d the still and stern solemnity ;

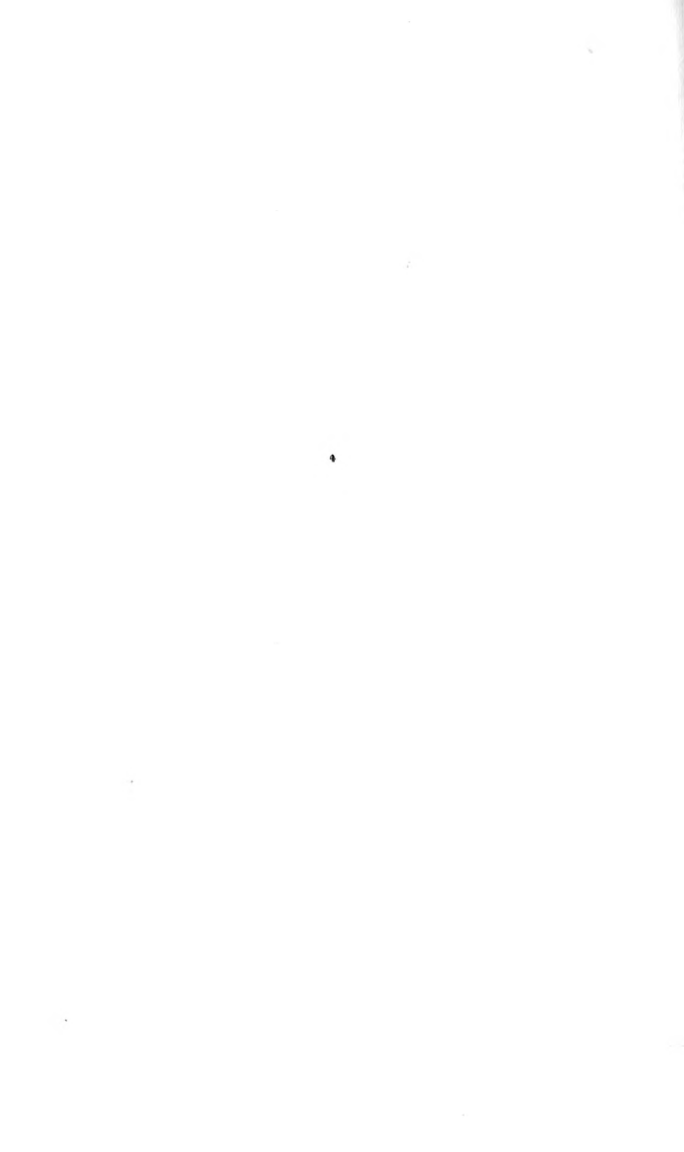
The pride of conquest there with grief unites,  
And blends a triumph with funereal rites ;  
Severe each look and fortified each face ;                    695  
Mourners—but mourners of a Spartan race !

Approaching thus the troop, who mute remain'd,  
By feelings novel to their souls enchain'd,  
Their burthen on the ground the mourners laid—  
Unveil'd the face—reveal'd the lifeless maid !                    700  
And cried, “ Now, servants of a tyrant's word,  
“ Now bear Phrosyne to Albania's lord !  
“ And tell Albania's lord, that thus alone  
“ The Calliretian maids approach his throne ! ”



# ALASHTAR.

AN ARABIAN TALE.



# ALASH TAR.

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## CANTO I.

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### 1.

CHILDREN of Ishmael ! to realms confin'd

Where sternly nature frowns throughout the year,  
Unfetter'd sands, that mount before the wind,

Plains ever wild, and valleys ever drear,

Where Spring's unwilling footsteps scarce appear ; 5  
For you no harvests rise, no vintage grows,

No branches stretch the sultry noon to cheer ;  
Nor blooms the painted pink or scented rose ;  
All, all around is waste, and desolate repose !

## 2.

But dews of bliss as bounteously descend 10  
On the lone desert as on Tempè's vale :  
True joys are of the soul—on mind depend,  
Nor influence own of scene, or veering gale.  
The sons of Greece tell sorrow's bitter tale  
Beside the rill, beneath the spreading tree ; 15  
In citron groves the Grecian maids bewail ;  
While speeds o'er sands the Arab blest and free,  
And loves his native home—the home of Liberty.

## 3.

Free as his winds he roves—and if his mind,  
Rude as the scene in which his breath he draws, 20  
Owns no subjection, no respect of kind,  
And bids defiance proud to social laws,  
His sterner virtues still extort applause—  
Mankind his common foe, by instinct led,  
He combats, sever'd from the social cause ; 25  
But who so swift to raise the drooping head,  
And cherish him with whom he once has broken bread ?

## 4.

With eagle sight that all around descries,  
With eagle heart that teaches him to dare,  
Light limbs that bear him through each bold emprise,  
Springs to his task the wild's appointed heir. 31  
The spring his bev'rage and a date his fare,  
He laughs at gold and all that slaves adore.  
Lord of the waste, he reigns contented there ;  
Whilst fancy cheers him with her richest store, 35  
Fairies, enchanted groves, and palaces of yore.

## 5.

Blest was Alashtar once, nor e'er was seen  
A brow less furrow'd, or a brighter eye ;  
Nor ever spirits light, and mind serene,  
More constant sunshine did within supply. 40  
Nor ever Arab youth more gallantly  
Urged his hot courser o'er the desert sand :  
Or bade the wind-outstripping falcon fly ;  
Or cast the rapid lance with firmer hand ; 44  
Or rais'd in battle's shock, a more destructive brand.

## 6.

Alas! how chang'd! behold Alashtar now,  
For ever quench'd that eye's enliv'ning ray,  
Deep gloom for ever settled on his brow,  
As thunder-clouds obscure a summer's day;  
His inmost heart is now become the prey 50  
Of eating cares; nor, if on Brusa's mound  
He stood, or all Istambol might survey,  
Would looks more cheerful hail the scene around,  
Than that despairing glance he fixes on the ground!

## 7.

A single thought, that robs him of repose, 55  
Is now his whole existence;—joys of yore  
Are blotted from his mind, and life bestows  
Nought that a sense of gladness can restore;  
He turns away from all that pleas'd before.  
E'en love, that erst within his bosom grew, 60  
Crush'd by a stronger passion, blooms no more;  
Revenge has stifled each delight he knew,  
Revenge unsated yet, and craving for its due.

## 8.

'Tis eve—appeased is the scorching beam,  
The desert's burning plain has ceas'd to glow ; 65  
Around, the cooling gales of freshness stream,  
Restoring nature, as they softly blow ;  
Th' unloaded camel, glad at large to go,  
Crops the rough herbage or the tam'risk spray—  
Alashtar from his tent proceeded slow, 70  
And, bending o'er the sand his lonely way,  
With gloomy joy beheld another closing day.

## 9.

Soon, with light hearts and renovated power,  
Forth into air the whole encampment prest,  
Catching new life from evening's welcome hour, 75  
Busied, or idle, each as seem'd him best.  
Here warriors' lips to heaven the prayer address ;  
There, dreamers, torpid in a still delight,  
Inhal'd the vapour that becalms the breast ;  
Yonder, the noisy circle loud recite 80  
The deeds of recent war, the wonders of the fight.

## 10.

For fresh they came from fight, a conqu'ring band,  
Rich in the rifled strangers' eastern store ;  
The men of Bagdad, bound for Syrian land,  
Left Ophir's pearls, and Cashmere's palampore, 85  
When the wild's dusky masters rush'd before  
The long expected train : in triumph high  
Homeward their treasure now the captors bore,  
Anxious the distant tents of Kaf to spy,  
To spread the glitt'ring spoil, and glad the maiden's  
eye. 90

## 11.

A moment, and Alashtar's lofty form,  
As far he loiter'd, fell on Daran's sight ;  
(Daran, more fierce than ocean's wintry storm,  
Wild as the savage beast that hates the light ;) 94  
" Behold," he cried, " where he, the chief of might,  
Holds converse with the sorrows of his breast !  
" His very looks my wither'd spirit blight,  
" And spread contagious gloom where'er they rest ;  
" Unhappy is the tribe beneath that frown oppress !



## 12.

- “ I counsell’d him to play the certain game, 100  
“ And, if Mohareb’s self escap’d his power,  
“ To scorch his foeman’s tribe, with penal flame,  
“ Consuming plant mature, and opening flow’r,  
“ Childhood and age, in one destructive hour.  
“ His soul had rested, with their ashes fed ; 105  
“ But he disdain’d, he said, his wrath to show’r  
“ On those who guiltless blood had never shed :  
“ Justice his only end—his mark, Mohareb’s head.

## 13.

- “ Then let the torturers, that never die,  
“ Molest his heart who stays his dastard hand ! 110  
“ Still let a brother’s blood prolong its cry,  
“ Still, unremoved, stain the tainted sand,  
“ And shame’s detested mark the chieftain brand  
“ Whose arm has not aveng’d.”—“ Fall bitter shame  
“ On thee,” (cried Hassan, eldest of the band,) 115  
“ On thee who dar’st profane Alashtar’s name,  
“ Alashtar, soul of fight, the chief of spotless fame.

## 14.

- “ When he, beneath whose arm that brother fell,  
“ Escaping fled, o’er wide Arabia’s reign  
“ Flew not Alashtar, crossing hill and dell, 120  
“ The stranger’s land, the desert’s boundless plain ?  
“ And if he fail’d, th’ assassin’s track to gain,  
“ Shall not his pangs and lasting agonies,  
“ Years of regret—the taunt of scorn restrain ?  
“ On those who mourn, the hand of Allah lies, 125  
“ And sacred should they be in other mortals’ eyes.

## 15.

- “ Alashtar smiles no longer ; still his soul,  
“ Wounded and pierc’d, not harden’d, by despair,  
“ Relaxing, bows to nature’s soft control ;  
“ Whether he hears the stranger-suppliant’s prayer,  
“ Or on the tents of Kaf bestows his care. 131  
“ And still, when battle gives a pause from thought,  
“ Rises he not a lion from his lair ?  
“ What sword like his with might and fury fraught ?  
“ Had yonder spoil been won, unless Alashtar fought ?

## 16.

“ But thou wert ne’er his friend.”—With glowing cheek  
Indignant Daran heard the saws of age, 137  
And all his fury rose—he burn’d to speak,  
But now Alashtar’s nearer steps engage  
Th’ attentive band, and awe the tongue of rage. 140  
Uprose the circle to receive their Chief,  
Yielding the homage due to prince or sage ;  
Alashtar, struggling with his inward grief,  
Repell’d oppressive thought, and grasp’d at short relief.

## 17.

His clearer brow reveal’d a beam of light ; 145  
“ Brothers ! ” he cried, “ for of Alashtar’s kind  
“ All were discover’d in the recent fight ;  
“ Well met ! your deeds are ever in my mind ;  
“ Would ye were nearer home, at ease reclin’d,  
“ Not here detain’d !—’tis strange the troop delay ; 150  
“ The merchant’s rifled gold would swiftly find  
“ The grain they sought—full well they know the way :  
“ Nor has a city charms to make an Arab stay.

## 18.

- “ Fair is the Syrian Queen — our comrades there  
“ Will view the gushing stream, the verdant grove, 155  
“ The halls where dashing fountains cool the air,  
“ The thrones of ease, of luxury, and love ;  
“ But who within that magic circle move ?  
“ Not men, but trembling slaves ; the desert’s horde  
“ Scorn the green arbour of the captive dove ; 160  
“ These sands their choice, secur’d by freedom’s sword,  
“ Where victor never trod, nor sway’d a tyrant lord.

## 19.

- “ Yes! in the glist’ning eyes that sparkle round,  
“ I read th’ assenting spirit I revere ; 164  
“ Thron’d on the desert’s stern unconquer’d ground,  
“ Reign Ishmael’s children, yet unknown to fear,  
“ Here bless’d with freedom’s good, and only here—  
“ All, all, save one, content ”——the darksome cloud,  
That for a space had seem’d to disappear,  
Now o’er his features cast its former shroud ; 170  
Lost in his secret thoughts, he saw nor tents, nor crowd.

## 20.

- “ Alas ! ” cried Hassan, “ are the children blest  
“ Who read that anguish in the father’s face ?  
“ Oh ! son of Malec ! Allah grant the rest ! ”  
“ Mohareb lives ! then shall the world’s wide space  
“ For scorn’d Alashtar yield a resting-place ? 176  
“ Oh ! might the assassin’s dark retreat be known,  
“ Might thirsty vengeance drink ! Eternal grace !  
“ Give me to hear Mohareb’s dying moan !  
“ Though were that parting sigh succeeded by my own.

## 21.

- “ Agib, my brother, years have sped their flight 181  
“ Since thou within the silent earth wert laid,  
“ Nor yet has retribution done thee right.  
“ Nightly before my tent I see thy shade :  
“ I hear thy voice a brother’s sloth upbraid ; 185  
“ ‘ How long,’ thou criest, ‘ unheeded shall I stay ?  
“ ‘ Alashtar, rise ! draw forth the tardy blade ;  
“ Remember Agib ! ’ years have roll’d away,  
“ Yet nightly speaks the voice, and chides the base  
delay.

## 22.

“ Shame is on Malec’s race.—Ye dews of heav’n    190  
    “ Fall not where’er conceal’d th’ assassin lies !  
“ Withhold, oh earth ! thy fruits ; in fury driven,  
    “ Rise from thy fiery bed, simoom, arise !  
    “ And load the gales that reach him as he flies  
“ With momentary death ! ”——The circle near    195  
    Watch’d the wild flashing of Alashtar’s eyes,  
And started at the voice they paus’d to hear ;  
E’en Daran’s soul was struck, and own’d a sense of fear.

## 23.

Sudden, from far, the camel’s distant bell  
    Rang through the silent desert from the west ;    200  
“ Our friends ! they join us at th’ appointed well.”  
    Alashtar silent heard, and, care-opprest,  
    Mov’d to his lonely tent:—his stormy breast  
Had not a kindly welcome to bestow,  
    Nor would he mar the pleasures of the rest :    205  
Lost in remember’d ills, and present woe,  
He fled to lonely thought, his refuge and his foe.

## 24.

Swift, through the circling palms, the band survey'd  
The kindred troop advance ; but saw, with dread,  
The foremost Arab, by a comrade's aid, 210  
Supported on a camel that was led—  
Had there been battle?—forth the party sped  
Anxious and fearful ; nearer as they prest  
They saw a stranger's face, his turban red  
Of Syrian form, his many-colour'd vest, 215  
One not of Ishmael's stock, or desert race, confest.

## 25.

Greeting and question rose in noisy din.  
The camels crouch, the wearied troop descend,  
And, loud and sharp, the voices mixt begin  
A war of tongues, that promis'd ne'er to end ; 220  
But soon the troop around the stranger bend,  
(No rude misfortune had their brethren known,)  
How gladly all a prompt assistance lend !  
For, gash'd with wounds, and helpless, and alone,  
The guest became a friend, a comrade of their own.

## 26.

Him had the Arabs found, deserted found, 226  
    (As from the city's walls they bent their way,)  
Expos'd, unshelter'd, on the burning ground,  
    Scorch'd by the sun, to parching thirst a prey.  
    Scarce had the stranger force and voice to say, 230  
That fate had led him to a traitor's snare,  
    Who seized his wealth, his camel bore away,  
And left him, wounded and deserted, there,  
    To meet a lingering fate, and perish in despair.

## 27.

The Syrian's story reach'd Alashtar's ear : 235  
    He, rising from his dream of anguish, cried,  
" Be this the stranger's tent, conduct him here."  
    The sufferer in they bore, and swift applied  
    Cool moisture to his lips, and swiftly tied  
On aching wounds the precious herbs that heal ; 240  
    Alashtar, busied at the stranger's side,  
His own afflictions soon forgot to feel ;  
Mercy compensates those who hear her blest appeal.



## 28.

Nor rudely mark'd, nor stamp'd in common mould,

Alashtar saw the Syrian's nervous frame. 245

His arm was form'd a warrior's sword to hold ;

His mien, though faded, spoke a soul of flame.

And, as returning life and vigour came,

Commanding air and high majestic look

Flash'd from his rolling eye—no Rayah tame 250

He seem'd, nor wonted Turkish rule to brook,

But freedom's dauntless son, of soul that never shook.



# ALASH TAR.

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## CANTO II.

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### 1.

OH, golden link ! connecting man with man,

Celestial Charity ! Oh, rarely seen

Since lust of rule and thirst of gold began 255

Unhallow'd reign—whene'er thy look serene

Sheds placid influence, how the soften'd mien,

And soften'd heart, consenting, own thy sway !

Thus rifted ice, enchain'd by winter keen,

Thaw'd by the sun, in rivers rolls away, 260

And glads the parched waste, and sparkles to the day.

## 2.

Alas! thy steps avoid the peopled town,  
And shun luxurious splendour's glittering mart,  
Where soft refinement smooths each feeling down,  
Or baser interest chills the youthful heart, 265  
And trains the mean to act their sordid part.  
Deserts and wilds are Charity's retreat ;  
There manly bosoms, ignorant of art,  
Own nature's throb, and glow with nature's heat—  
There thorns are pluck'd away from fellow pilgrims'  
feet. 270

## 3.

Watchful beside the troubled couch of pain  
 Alashtar sat till morning ting'd the skies.  
 The wearied stranger tried to sleep in vain—  
 Alashtar heard his oft repeated sighs ;  
 Saw wild emotions in succession rise.— 275  
 Oh, Sleep ! how falsely call'd the friend of care,  
 Thou hearest but the blest :—the weeping eyes,  
 That want thee most, thy blessings may not share,—  
 No poppy-wreath hast thou for comfortless despair.

## 4.

Yet, when the breeze had cool'd his cheek awhile, 280  
    'The stranger rais'd his sunken head and pray'd,  
Blessing the guardian chief—but not a smile  
    The precious boon of rescued life repaid.  
His look was downcast, and his sighs betray'd  
The spirit's rather than the body's throes. 285  
    In silence long, at last, "Oh! fatal aid,"  
He cried, "that came to lengthen out my woes!  
"Oh! why was death deferr'd; why snatch me from  
    repose?"

## 5.

Alashtar silent heard, and sigh'd to find  
    One fated like himself; then mild replied:— 290  
"Oh, child of sorrow! let the tortur'd mind  
    "Disclose the pangs 'tis greater pain to hide;  
    "For one is near by destiny allied  
"With those who weep, a partner in distress;  
    "    This Arab heart thy sorrows will divide; 295  
"This Arab arm, perchance, thy cause redress;  
"Stranger, whate'er thy woes, I have not suffer'd less."

## 6.

“ I know thee not, yet see thee lov’d and great,”  
Exclaim’d the guest, “ the shepherd of thy fold ;  
“ Chieftain, art thou, like me, proscrib’d by fate?” 300  
A smother’d groan Alashtar’s feelings told ;  
And “ by the rank,” he cried, “ that mortals hold  
“ Their wealth, their honours, e’en the look they show,  
“ Judge not the heart within :—he must unfold  
“ The mazes of the soul, who seeks to know 305  
“ Our true, our real lot, of happiness or woe.”

## 7.

“ Chief, I have lost my all—as much alone  
“ Art thou in cheerless life ?” return’d the guest,  
“ She, she, the sun-beam of my day is gone,  
“ And all is in darkness now :—in Syria’s breast 310  
“ My all of bliss, my hopes, my treasure rest.—  
“ That treasure lost I loath’d the alter’d land  
“ That from her presence all its charm possest,  
“ And, calling back to thought the realms of sand,  
“ I sought the desert’s plain, and join’d the traitor  
band. 315

## 8.

“ For not to Syrian race I owe my birth,—  
“ The desert’s true-born son—compell’d to fly  
“ With her I lov’d I left this native earth,  
“ And breath’d for years beneath a foreign sky :  
“ Such was the written will of destiny. 320  
“ From home and friends an eager flight I bent,  
“ Led by the guiding beam of beauty’s eye,  
“ And pitch’d on Lebanon my wand’ring tent,  
“ Safe on the fortress height—the home of banishment.

## 9.

“ This arm had slain a foe—nay—start not, Chief! 325  
“ He robb’d me of my love :—paternal sway,  
“ Cold and regardless of a daughter’s grief,  
“ To might and riches gave the prize away ;  
“ But as the rival, on the marriage day,  
“ Bore home my plighted maid, a chosen train, 330  
“ To quell his pride, in secret ambush lay—  
“ Beneath this arm he fell—Oh ! triumph vain !  
“ The bride I won is lost, can ne’er be mine again.

## 10.

“ Oh ! thou for whom I cast aside my name—  
“ Oh ! thou for whom my native land I fled— 335  
“ For whom I could my native courage tame,  
“ Shunning the stern avenger of the dead,  
“ Oh ! would I shar’d thy cold and peaceful bed !”  
Like palm-tree, bent beneath the wintry wind,  
Trembled Alashtar’s form—for wild and dread 340  
The rushing thoughts, the horrors undefin’d,  
Wak’d by the stranger’s words, that flash’d across his  
mind.

## 11.

Silent he stood, for speech refus’d to flow ;  
At length fierce struggles way for utterance found ;  
Yet scarce he said, in hurried voice and low, 345  
“ Stranger, reveal thy name ?” “ On Arab ground  
“ ’Twas once Mohareb.”—At the hated sound,  
The fatal hinge of all his destinies,  
Like one transfix’d by sudden mortal wound,  
Alashtar started back ; before his eyes 350  
The object of his search, the hidden serpent lies.



## 12.

Wond'ring Mohareb saw the troubled mien,  
The pale and quiv'ring lip, the reddened eye ;  
And, "thus," he cried, "is mild compassion seen ?  
"Is this the look of promis'd sympathy ?" 355  
Wild, bursting forth the frenzied Chief's reply  
Struck on his soul. "Oh ! wretch, long sought in vain !  
"Oh ! thou who bad'st thy hapless rival die,  
"Expect not now compassion's aid to gain,  
"Alashtar at thy side, the brother of the slain." 360

## 13.

Sprung from his couch, as if without an ill,  
Mohareb (gush'd his opening wounds anew) ;  
"Amongst the sons of Kaf? no—distant still  
"The unforgotten border-line they drew—  
"These the avoided tents?—the hostile crew?—  
"Alashtar thou?"—"The sons of Kaf are here. 366  
"On scent of prey, from distant home we flew ;  
"And Agib's name, resounded in thine ear,  
"Shall dissipate the doubt, and prove th' avenger  
near."

## 14.

Now (for Alashtar's frenzy, heard without, 370  
Through all the camp had scatter'd swift dismay,)  
Rush'd to their Emir's tent the Arab rout.

"Behold Mohareb!" triumph's lurid ray  
Illum'd each face, as wonder sank away.  
Mov'd by remembrance of Alashtar's woe, 375  
"Dispatch!" his comrades clamour'd, "smite and  
slay!"

Fierce Daran's voice provok'd the righteous blow,  
"Now take our Chief his due, the life-blood of his foe."

## 15.

Pale from his recent wound, but undeprest,  
Mohareb stood with lifted front elate; 380  
The lion thus, whom hunters close invest,  
Glares on the circling host; and "welcome, fate!"  
He cried; "Alashtar, flesh the steel of hate:  
"Yet, ere I fall, to vindicate my fame  
"Now and hereafter, learn, however late, 385  
"That not from fear of thy revengeful aim,  
"Mohareb ever fled, or bore another name.

## 16.

“ At Zeineb’s prayer, with Zeineb’s self he fled,  
“ Seduc’d and won by timid beauty’s tear,  
“ Who, had he for himself alone to dread, 390  
“ Had met thee hand to hand, and spear to spear,  
“ And then defied thee, as he braves thee here.”  
Flew to his sword Alashtar’s eager hand,  
And seem’d Mohareb’s fated moment near ;  
But, equal still his fury to command, 395  
Alashtar slow replac’d the half unsheathed brand.

## 17.

“ Mohareb, for revolving years,” he cried,  
“ Alashtar’s soul has yearn’d to meet his foe.  
“ In search of thee he travers’d regions wide, 399  
“ The plains of flame, the distant heights of snow ;  
“ And now this sword might give the final blow.  
“ But thou hast shar’d my tent—a man distrest—  
“ And therefore safe : e’en vengeance must forego  
“ Its bloody right, the steel of hate must rest ; 404  
“ Sacred the stranger’s claim—secure Alashtar’s guest.”

## 18.

He spoke : high sounding from the circling band  
The murmurs deep of sullen anger swell'd ;  
“ Preserve th' assassin now !—restrain thy hand !  
“ Oh ! woman-hearted Chief ! if vainly held  
“ Alashtar's sword, by us be ruffians quell'd ! ” 410  
And Daran rush'd to strike ; but, fix'd between,  
Th' indignant Chief his desperate horde repell'd,  
Mohareb's guardian shield ; nor vainly seen  
The menace of his arm and terrors of his mien.

## 19.

Then to Mohareb—“ Rest, devoid of fear : 415  
“ Alashtar shall thy fortress still remain.  
“ Till clos'd thy gashes, rest securely here ;  
“ Then go, but guarded, to thy native plain.  
“ Alashtar would efface but half his stain  
“ Smote he a feeble foe :—three moons shall fade, 420  
“ And thou the fulness of thy strength regain,  
“ Or ere we join the sharp and deadly blade ;  
“ Then come the contest on ; be vengeance then al-  
lay'd.”

## 20.

Ere long, by care preserv'd, by care restor'd,  
Mohareb, not alone, began his way. 425  
Then, shouting loud, advance the joyous horde,  
Or whilst the breath of morn precedes the day,  
Or evening dews assuage the fiery ray.  
Sagacious of the path where, vast and wide,  
Trackless as ocean's breast the desert lay, 430  
Their course they kept; at night their ruling guide,  
As erst to sea-tost barks, the starry host supplied.

## 21.

How fair is night to Arab rover's eyes!  
What though alone the dreary waste he dare,  
Companion'd still he feels, so gemm'd the skies 435  
With myriad habitants, that, sparkling there,  
Discomfit darkness, making all the air  
One living blaze: nor cloud nor vapour chill  
Obscures the azure vault; but harmless flare  
The meteor lights that seem to rove at will— 440  
Oh! fair is eastern night; so cool, so bright, so still!

## 22.

Three days the band advanc'd ; a fearful sign

The fourth reveal'd— th' horizon, thick and red,  
Announc'd the desert's storm—the wrath divine

Sounds in the blast, and fierce and dark and dread

The rushing progress of the tempest sped : 446

Heap'd into waves, the sandy ocean, riven,

Tumbles convuls'd, and rises from its bed—

The desert moves ; and, lash'd by winds of heav'n,

A curtain dark of death across the wild is driven. 450

## 23.

Trembling the band survey'd the storm's advance—

Alashtar trembled not ; but, gazing round,

Fix'd on the cloud a wild, indignant glance :

“ Comes then destruction when the foe is found?—

“ Shall justice fail? ” he cried, “ nor mortal wound

“ Repay Mohareb? ” but the written doom 456

Here had not fixt th' insuperable bound :

The veering tempest turn'd the coming gloom,

And bore to other plains an army's sandy tomb.

## 24.

Rescued from fate, the scarce-recover'd train      460  
    Beneath the sun advanc'd ; but soon descried  
A palmy island rising from the plain :  
    Arriv'd at length, the well-known spot they tried,  
    And found the spring to foreign eyes denied.      464  
The tents are pitch'd : they chas'd the thoughts of fear ;  
    And, hunger's dictates briefly satisfied,  
The social ring they form, and pause to hear  
Tradition's oral tale, to Arab circle dear.

## 25.

Again they mov'd, or ere the east was red,  
    And left the level sand—the morning's light      470  
Reveal'd the rocks, the toiling camel's dread.  
    But here, though hill and dale arose to sight,  
    Still mourn'd the region, curs'd by nature's blight ;  
Stern desolation's standard, still unfurl'd,  
    Shadow'd each stony vale and barren height—      475  
It seem'd as reflux ocean, backward curl'd,  
Had ceded to mankind a new and dreary world.

## 26.

Now glancing past the windings of the rock,

They open'd on a bay of secret land,

Where herbage, coarse and thin, supplied the flock.

Oh ! welcome sight to journey-wearied band ! 481

The tents of Kaf in those recesses stand.

Then thunder'd forth the cries of victory,

Return'd by welcome shout and waving hand ;

Long parted friends to friends' embraces fly ; 485

And triumph beams around, and pleasure's sparkling  
eye.

## 27.

And one there was, a tender graceful maid,

Returning from the desert's scanty spring—

Her weighty pitcher on the ground she laid—

And, darting forwards, on affection's wing 490

Flew, round a brother's cherish'd form to cling.

She saw his head no longer drooping low,

And blest the change that time had power to bring—

“ Zora, my sister, shut the book of woe : 494

“ Rejoice ! ” Alashtar cried, “ discover'd is the foe.”



# ALASH TAR.

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## CANTO III.

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### 1.

How sweet is woman's love, is woman's care !

When struck and shatter'd in the stormy hour  
We droop forlorn, and man, with stoic air,

Neglects, or roughly aids, then, rob'd in power,

Then nature's angel seeks the mourner's bower.

How blest her smile that gives the soul repose !    501

How blest her voice, that, like the genial shower  
Pour'd on the desert, gladdens as it flows,

And cheers the sinking heart and conquers half our  
woes !

## 2.

Nought, save the magic sound of Zora's voice, 505

Might ever calm Alashtar's fix'd despair ;

And she, deciding with a steadfast choice,

Regardless of the charms that were her share,

(Of darkly beaming eyes and raven hair,

The cypress form its graceful height that rears,) 510

Deaf to the suitor's oft repeated prayer,

Zora resign'd the pride of beauty's years

To soothe a brother's lot, whom misery endears.

## 3.

She, like Alashtar, mourn'd a brother slain,

But Zora bad her sorrows seem to sleep, 515

And, bent alone to soothe Alashtar's pain,

Smil'd in his presence, and withdrew to weep ;

And, when she saw the cloud of passion sweep

Dark o'er his changeful brow, when rankling hate

Drove to his heart the goading arrow deep, 520

Fix'd at his side would Zora fondly wait,

And press his burning cheek, and bid the storm abate.

## 4.

Or, when in milder sorrow's thoughtful gloom,  
Alashtar sat, absorb'd in waking dream ;  
Then Zora, bending o'er her Arab loom, 525  
Or spreading fruits to catch the sunny beam,  
Alone on maiden's task intent would seem ;  
The while her eye would dart its cheerful ray ;  
Her voice would fall like ear-refreshing stream ;  
Artful, but innocent, her looks that play, 530  
And from himself at length the mourner steal away.

## 5.

In earlier years how blest the little race,  
The branches green of Malec's rising tree.  
Then Agib liv'd, and, in that happy space,  
The loving brothers ne'er apart would be ; 535  
Zora, their queen, in playful infancy.  
Anon they watch'd the herd, together still,  
And daily Zora, blithest of the three,  
Would bring the pitcher from the distant rill, 539  
And o'er their parched lips the precious drops distil.

## 6.

Hunters ere long, each gallant stripling sought  
One kindred end—how mounted Agib's pride,  
Who first her tame gazel to Zora brought ;  
How blest Alashtar, when at Zora's side 544  
He plac'd the wild-bird's plume. Oh ! years that glide  
On downy pinion ! could the youthful mind  
The page of written fate have then descried,  
How had they started back—amaz'd to find  
A world so darkly false, that wore a face so kind !

## 7.

Oh ! thou deceiver, life, how brightly gay 550  
Thy future scenes on youthful fancies rise,  
Till cold experience draws the veil away,  
And, drest in all its dread realities,  
Dark in our sight the blighted prospect lies :  
So from afar the faithless deserts show 555  
Ideal lakes to cheat the pilgrim's eyes ;  
Thirsting he toils across the plains that glow,  
And finds a waste of sand, where waters seem'd to flow.

## 8.

“ Discover’d is the foe ! ” that echo’d strain  
Fell like apointed dart on Zora’s ear. 560  
Alashtar’s joy she tried to share in vain ;  
His look of gladness prov’d the combat near,  
Danger approaching all to Zora dear.  
Could she regret a time of wrath and woes ?  
Zora reprov’d the selfishness of fear ; 565  
But still unchang’d the bitter thoughts arose,  
Perplex’d the sister’s heart and robb’d her of repose.

## 9.

Now Zora nightly mark’d the waning ray  
That linger’d in the sky—for well she knew  
What deeds were waiting for yon orb’s decay. 570  
Knew that, before another crescent grew,  
One heart must cease to beat—her alter’d hue  
The anguish of her secret soul declar’d ;  
And darksome were the scenes that fancy drew,  
When in her sight his sword Alashtar bar’d, 575  
Sharpen’d the deadly blade, the pointed lance prepar’d.

## 10.

The moon is dark in heav'n—the morrow's light  
Leads forth Alashtar—now at Agib's tomb  
He prays alone, and gives to silent night 579  
The yearnings of his soul—through storm and gloom,  
With him to watch, see mournful Zora come.  
There, on that mound, one brother's lowly bed,  
She kneels, uncertain of another's doom,  
Gazing on him, whose blood may soon be shed,  
With thoughts that veer between the living and the  
dead. 585

## 11.

“ Agib ! ” Alashtar's voice exulting cried,  
“ To-morrow, and this arm shall reach thy foe !  
“ At last—at last—oh ! rapture long denied !  
“ This arm, if not as impotent as slow,  
“ Shall teach th' assassin's forfeit blood to flow. 590  
“ Sister of Agib, triumph for his sake,  
“ Who, unappeased, sleeps in dust below ;  
“ Oh ! might the tenant of the tomb awake,  
“ The joys of vengeance share, the crimson cup partake ! ”

## 12.

Then Zora struggled with her grief in vain— 595

“ Alas ! the hand, that made us mourners here,

“ To-morrow strikes at Malec’s race again !

“ Oh ! last of Malec’s sons ! ” — “ Unworthy fear !

“ Shall not Alashtar well become his bier,

“ If not alone he fall ? — is life his care ? 600

“ Be red the foe’s, if red thy brother’s spear ! ”

Then Zora shriek’d, and tore her streaming hair,

“ Oh ! clos’d be Zora’s eyes, if heard Alashtar’s prayer ! ”

## 13.

That piteous voice Alashtar’s soul o’ercame—

“ Child of illustrious Malec, can thy sight 605

“ Well pleas’d behold his son’s enduring shame ?

“ Nor think that he who rushes on the fight

“ Cuts short his day—on Eden’s guarded height

“ Does not the book our destinies display ?

“ Our doom is written ere we see the light ; 610

“ Man only falls on fate’s appointed day ;

“ That hour no mortal act can hasten, or delay.”

## 14.

“ Yet who,” cried Zora, “ who foresees the close ?”

Now warning streaks approaching dawn betray’d ;

“ Agib ! I go !” exclaim’d the chief ; he rose, 615

And silent, follow’d by the silent maid,

Regain’d the tent, and, swift in arms array’d

Went forth, but turning back with hasty tread,

On Zora fixed his eyes, great Allah’s aid

Invok’d, to guard that unprotected head, 620

Then sudden rush’d away, and on to battle sped.

## 15.

Oft had the morning left the eastern gate ;

Still Zora, worn by doubt’s corroding woe,

Nor saw the warrior more, nor heard his fate.

Oh ! worst of agonies !—Oh ! not to know 625

If struck, or shunn’d, the deprecated blow !

Still Zora, station’d on the topmost height,

Watchful survey’d the desert’s plain below ;

At length, as sunk the fifth receding light,

The scarce-distinguish’d band arose upon her sight. 630



## 16.

Moment of breathless hope and breathless fear !

Lives, lives Alashtar?—from her airy post  
(Swift in her passage as the bounding deer)

Downward she flies—as yet, in distance lost,  
Th' uncertain features of the coming host                    635  
Escap'd her gaze—their dull and tardy pace,

Their silence, deep and still, disturb'd her most.  
Nearer they come—his very form—his face :—  
He lives !—Oh ! precious sight for Zora's eye to trace !

## 17.

Forwards the maid with beating bosom sprung ;                    640

They meet—Oh ! meeting how unlike the last !  
'Twas he—but tempest on his forehead hung :

He saw the maid—but, darkly shudd'ring, cast  
His mantle o'er his face, then hurried past,  
Regardless of her voice : the silent train                    645

Spurr'd their impetuous steeds and follow'd fast ;  
On each th' astonish'd sister call'd in vain,  
But dim was Hassan's eye, and Daran smiled disdain.

## 18.

Is it a vision, by delusion sent ?

Is she awake?—a form of senseless stone                    650  
Awhile she stands, then rushes to the tent.

There sat Alashtar, thoughtful and alone—

“ Oh ! speak ! ’tis Zora ! ” one oppressive groan  
Burst from Alashtar’s soul, and gave reply.

On Zora then, as one unlov’d, unknown,                    655  
He fix’d the wildness of his vacant eye ;  
Unanswer’d saw her weep, unanswer’d heard her sigh.

## 19.

Frantic she wander’d forth, and sought the train ;

“ Friends of Alashtar ! rend the frightful veil !

“ Whate’er the fatal truth, the truth explain.”                    660

But Daran answer’d, “ Let the weak bewail !

“ Those who neglect to strike deserve to fail.”

“ Inhuman ! on the writhing worm to tread ! ”

Cried Hassan, “ Zora, hear the grievous tale.

“ In vain to battle’s ground Alashtar sped,                    665

“ No foeman came—the coward wretch has fled.”

## 20.

“ This sets the seal ! ” th’ afflicted sister cried,  
“ Oh ! when these eyes beheld his face again,  
“ Far other, brighter, prospects hope supplied !  
“ Sweet peace return’d amongst us to remain ; 670  
“ A tranquil ev’ning after days of pain !  
“ But his are tortures which destroy the brave.  
“ Now my sad part must I once more sustain,  
“ Watch by his side, attempt each art to save,  
“ Support Alashtar’s soul or share Alashtar’s grave.”

## 21.

And Zora, turning, wip’d th’ unbidden tear ; 676  
When, swift advancing through the deep’ning shade,  
Mounted and arm’d, Alashtar’s self drew near !  
Wond’ring th’ assembled tribe their Chief survey’d ;  
Rooted to earth, the pale and speechless maid 680  
Waited the blow that fate was aiming now.  
A moment on his course the Chief delay’d,  
And briefly thus, “ Hear, all, your Emir’s vow !  
“ He never more returns with shame upon his brow.

## 22.

“ Hence, hence, self-exil’d, is Alashtar gone ! ” 685

He spoke ; nor pausing further word to say,  
Past, like a meteor’s flight. “ Oh ! not alone,”

Cried hapless Zora, “ let Alashtar stray !

“ Hassan, conduct him back, pursue his way :

“ Restore him, to a sister’s care restore ! ” 690

Alashtar’s friends the maiden’s voice obey ;  
Leap on their steeds, forsake their tents once more,  
And, aided by the stars, their Emir’s track explore.

## 23.

Alashtar saw them come, nor stay’d, nor spoke.

Through the long night the persevering band 695  
Observ’d his course : and now the morning broke,

And now the sun shot downward on the sand ;

But a more ardent flame, and fiercer brand,  
Smote on Alashtar’s brain, and urged his speed.

He sought beneath no shading rock to stand ; 700  
He past the well, nor would its treasures heed,  
Though parch’d his fever’d lip, and faint his panting  
steed.

## 24.

All, all was hush'd beneath the blazing sky ;

The very lizard fled the scorching gleam :—

Sudden, a distant troop the band descry ; 705

Nor less in desperate haste the strangers seem ;

Nor less regardless of the noontide beam—

They come—by whom, what chieftain, are they led ?

Does fortune smile, or does Alashtar dream ?

Near and more near the rapid horsemen sped— 710

Lo ! Saad's eager sons—Mohareb at their head !

## 25.

Red flash'd the lightning from Alashtar's eyes—

As famish'd lion from his dreaded lair,

Forward th' avenger springs, and distant cries—

“ Coward, well met—behold thee in the snare 715

“ Thou sought'st to shun—now tremble, now despair,

“ Not flight itself can baffle vengeance more.”

The foe rush'd on—“ That sword I come to dare ; ”  
(Nor shame nor terror on his brow he wore ;)

“ Thine utmost I defy—nor sought to shun be-  
fore.” 720

## 26.

- “ Oh ! false as base ! ” in fury and disdain,  
Alashtar cried ; but check'd his fierce career ;  
“ What new device shall screen thy fame again ?  
“ Speak, and be brief.” “ Alashtar, not by fear,  
“ But chance, withheld, I fail'd to meet thy spear.  
“ Advancing on the battle's eve, we slept 726  
“ By Shedad's well, the place of combat near—  
“ Unseen, their watch the sons of Caled kept,  
“ And seiz'd us in the night, and into bondage swept !

## 27.

- “ They seiz'd us unawares, and forc'd away 730  
“ To that unfriendly ground which bears their name ;  
“ And if Alashtar, on the battle day  
“ Thy wrath arose—believe my wrath the same ;  
“ I told my tale, expos'd my tarnish'd fame ;  
“ But nought could touch the mercenary crew. 735  
“ At length from home the ransom-camels came ;  
“ My price was paid ; and freedom scarce he knew  
“ Ere to redeem his pledge this way Mohareb flew.”

## 28.

- “ Then art thou still Alashtar’s fit compeer !”  
Return’d the Chief ; “ a vile and trembling slave 740  
“ Had poorly made amends—decide we here ;  
“ Decide we now—indifferent to the brave  
“ The place, the moment that prepares a grave.”  
“ Advance !” Mohareb cried, “ stand either train  
“ Afar—nor interpose to aid or save— 745  
“ Be life the stake, and may this steel again  
“ Receive in Malec’s blood an honourable stain !”

## 29.

- “ Thus Agib greets thee !” cried the rushing Chief :  
The moment won that was his being’s aim ;  
Long baffled hatred, long collected grief, 750  
Fan the wild fury of th’ avenging flame ;  
While doubted worth, and long o’erclouded name,  
Urg’d on Mohareb ; what attentive eye,  
That saw the progress of the deathful game,  
Nor for a moment clos’d ?—what bosom nigh 755  
But held a beating heart, and lost its constancy ?

## 30.

Thunders the earth beneath the trampling steeds,  
As either foe, with watchful hand and glance,  
Labours to hurt, nor either yet succeeds.  
At length Mohareb aims his rapid lance, 760  
Grazes Alashtar's arm, and wheels askance.  
Th' indignant Chieftain, madden'd by the wound,  
Spurs on amain; but powerless to advance,  
Spent with o'erlengthen'd toil, an utmost bound  
Alashtar's courser tried, and sank upon the ground. 765

## 31.

The gallant foe, (disdaining to pursue  
Contest unequal,) swift to earth descends—  
With swords they now the mortal strife renew.  
Soon trembled at their post Alashtar's friends;  
For o'er the weaken'd Chief Mohareb bends 770  
In act to strike; but now the loosen'd sand,  
As strive the twain afoot, in clouds ascends,  
And veils each warrior from th' observant band;  
Stiff'ning in dread suspense, the doubtful squadrons  
stand.



## 32.

Silent the awful pause ; still nought is seen,            775  
    Save the chance glitter of the lifted blade ;  
Nought heard, save iron clash of weapons keen ;  
    Each squadron mute—the bravest heart dismay'd :  
    At length a falling crash, a groan convey'd  
Death's awful sign—the din of swords is o'er—    780  
    Loosen'd no more, the sand withdraws its shade.  
Who, who may triumph?—Lo! outstretch'd in gore  
Mohareb's lifeless corse—Alashtar conqueror !



## NOTES ON ALASHTAR.

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Page 111, line 1.

*Children of Ishmael !*

The Arabs consider Ishmael as their common progenitor.

Page 113, line 35.

*Whilst Fancy cheers him with her richest store.*

The fondness of the Arabs for the Muse is nowhere better illustrated than in Sir William Jones's beautiful Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations.

Page 113, line 43.

—— *bade the wind-outstripping falcon fly.*

Hawking is one of the amusements of the deserts.—In this way the Arabs often hunt the gazel and the ostrich. The hawk settles itself upon the head of these animals, and terrifies them by flapping its wings in their eyes, which impedes their progress, and allows the hunters time to come up.

Page 114, line 51.

*Brusa's mound.*

There is an eminence near Brusa, (formerly Prusias, the capital of ancient Bythinia,) which commands as beautiful a view as can be well imagined of the plain, the forest, the city, and of the Asiatic Olympus, which serves as a back-ground to the picture.

Page 114, line 52.

*Or all Istambol might survey.*

Istambol—Constantinople, of which the view from the sea is one of the finest in the world.

Page 116, line 85.

*Cashmere's palampore.*

The Cashmere shawl.

Page 117, lines 113 and 114.

*And shame's detested mark the chieftain brand*

*Whose arm has not aveng'd.*

We were ourselves witnesses to a curious instance of the sense which the Arabs entertain of the duties of revenge. During one of our days' journey in the desert, we were waiting under the shade of a rock till the remainder of our party came up. When they arrived, we observed

emotion and disorder in their countenances. We inquired the cause, and, after some hesitation, the Arabs expressed a hope that we should not think worse of them for not having killed a servant of ours, who, it appeared, had given one of them a blow. The Arab whom he had struck had been riding behind him on the same camel, and had been amusing himself by causing the camel to play tricks, to the discomfort of the European, whose anger at last induced him to inflict the manual reproof, of the probable consequences of which he was not in the least aware. The Arabs told us they were perfectly conscious of what they ought to have done, and much ashamed of their lenity, but as we were strangers, and as they had eaten bread with us for many days, they really had not been able to bring themselves to take the man's life. It may be imagined how sincerely we assured them that they had not lowered themselves in our esteem.

Page 120, line 154.

*Fair is the Syrian Queen.*

Damascus.

Page 122, line 193.

*Rise from thy fiery bed, Simoom, arise!*

The pestilential hot wind of the desert, which suffocates men and beasts:—the only way to avoid its effects is to fall down flat, and to bury the face as much as pos-

sible in the sand. A Turk of Cairo told us, that, when he was performing his pilgrimage to Mecca, one of these winds had overtaken the caravan in company with which he was travelling, and had exterminated 600 men as it past.

Page 125, line 250.

*No Rayah tame.*

Rayah—a Christian slave.

Page 127, line 254.

*Celestial Charity!*

Charity is here used in its largest sense, and is meant to imply general and active benevolence towards suffering humanity, not restricted to the mere act of giving money.

Page 143, line 526.

*Or spreading fruits.*

To spread dates in the sun, in order to dry them, is one of the usual employments of the wives and daughters of the Bedouins.

Page 144, line 543.

——— *her tame gazel.*

The Arabs are not insensible to the external advantages of this little antelope. Its grace, the size and expression of its eye, and its timidity, supply them with images illustrative of female beauty. Gazels are often kept tame by the Arabs in their tents and houses.

Page 144, line 545.

——— *the wild bird's plume.*

The feathers of the ostrich.

Page 144, lines 555 and 556.

*So from afar the faithless desert show*

*Ideal lakes to cheat the pilgrim's eyes.*

The optical deception of the mirage is sufficiently known.

Page 147, line 610.

*Our doom is written.*

“The sixth article of Mahometan belief is, that every thing that has, or will come to pass, has been, from eternity, written on the preserved, or secret table, which is a white stone of immense largeness, in heaven, near the throne of God.”—*Ockley's Life of Mahomet.*

Page 152, line 700.

*He sought beneath no shading rock to stand.*

Allusion to this custom is made, more than once by the inspired writers. Thus in Isaiah:—“The shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

Page 153, line 704.

*The very lizard fled the scorching beam.*

All those who have been in hot countries will remember how fond the lizards are of exposing themselves on stones, walls, &c., to the hottest rays of the noon-day

sun. The heat in the deserts is so great, that it was sometimes almost more than we could bear in the month of January.

Page 154, line 736.

——— *the ransom camels.*

The Arabs make their payments *in kind*, and purchase the liberty of their friends, when made prisoners by an hostile tribe, at the expense of a certain number of goats, sheep, or camels, according to the dignity of the captive.



## POEMS.



## THE PORTRAIT.

---

YES—whilst my sight is yet allow'd to rest  
On those dear features, (which it calms my breast  
To look upon, and, as I watch them, give  
The purest bliss that mortals may receive,)  
Let me preserve their image for a space,  
And from the life a faint resemblance trace.  
Oh! if the likeness were correctly made,  
And if my colours were not such as fade,  
Through time's long year the Portrait would be  
    prais'd,  
And future ages profit, as they gaz'd.

Lovely is youth ; but, robb'd of vermil hue,  
Age may be lovely, and enchant the view,

When the soul brightens, and th' immortal ray  
Is seen more clearly through the shrine's decay :  
When the mild aspect, cloudless and serene,  
Reveals in silence what the life has been—  
Untroubled as the awful close draws near,  
Still fondly turn'd to all remaining here ;  
Still breathing peace, and tenderness, and love,  
Illum'd with nearer radiance from above !—  
Such, such 'tis mine to witness day by day,  
And more than filial reverence to pay.  
For, if I owe her life, and ev'ry flow'r  
That e'er I gather'd since my natal hour,  
And (more than life, or happiness, or fame)  
The fear of God, since I could lisp his name ;  
If no conflicting ties divide my heart,  
And chance, nor change, have forc'd us yet apart ;  
If for the other each too oft has fear'd,  
And mutual woes and peril have endear'd ;  
Now that her spirit undisturb'd remains  
By sharpen'd trials and increasing pains,

I view the mother and the saint in one,  
And pay beyond the homage of a son.

Ye who approach her threshold, cast aside  
The world, and all the littleness of pride ;  
Come not to pass an hour, and then away,  
Back to the giddy follies of the day ;  
With reverent step and heav'n-directed eye,  
Clad in the robes of meek humility,  
As to a temple's hallow'd courts, repair,  
And come the lesson, as the scene, to share.  
Gaze on the ruin'd frame and pallid cheek,  
Prophetic symptoms, that too plainly speak !  
Those limbs that fail her as she falters by ;  
Pangs, that from nature will extort a sigh ;  
See her from social intercourse remov'd,  
Forbid to catch the friendly voice she lov'd ;  
Then mark the look compos'd, the tranquil air,  
Unfeign'd contentment still enthroned there.

The cheerful beams, that, never quench'd, adorn  
That cheek, and gladden those who thought to  
mourn ;

Benignant smiles for all around that shine,  
Unbounded love, and charity divine !  
This *is* religion—not unreal dreams,  
Enthusiast raptures, and seraphic gleams ;  
But Faith's calm triumph—Reason's steady sway,  
Not the brief lightning, but the perfect day.

Mark we the close of years without offence,  
Of more than this, and more than innocence—  
A life of deeds—a long unblemish'd course  
Of gen'rous action, and of moral force.

Her have I seen assail'd by deepest woe,  
O'erwhelming desolation's sudden blow ;  
How much she felt, the body's ills display ;  
From that dread hour began the slow decay.

Yet she, who quiver'd at another's pain,  
Her own with stoic firmness could sustain ;  
Stood unsubdu'd—but meekly kiss'd the rod,  
And took with patience all that came from God ;  
And curb'd her grief, when sorrow's cup ran o'er,  
Lest those who saw her weep should weep the  
more.

Her have I seen when death was at her side,  
And Hope no longer to our prayers replied,  
Nor then celestial visions blest her sight,  
Or angel's waiting for the spirit's flight ;  
Awe she confest—but awe devoid of fear,  
In death, as life, who knew her Maker near.  
Yet she, whose claim (if any may) will prove  
Sure of the joys that crown the just above,  
Humbly preferr'd no title of her own,  
And on redeeming grace repos'd alone.  
In acts of prayer life's ebbing moments past,  
Or acts of love, benignant to the last.

Nor one forgot, nor fail'd to recommend  
Each poor dependant—name each valued friend ;  
And, most resign'd to summons all but given,  
Still human, griev'd to leave us, though for heav'n.

Nor hers alone the virtues that require  
Some stroke of fate to rouse their latent fire ;  
Great for an hour, heroic for a scene,  
Inert through all the common life between ;  
But such as each diurnal task perform,  
Pleas'd in the calm, unshaken by the storm.  
In her had nature bounteously combin'd  
The tend'rest bosom with the strongest mind ;  
Sense that seem'd instinct, so direct it caught  
The just conclusion, oft refus'd to thought ;  
Simplicity of heart, that never knew  
What meant the baubles which the world pursue ;  
All these, by not a taint of self alloy'd,  
All these were hers—for others all employ'd.



To seek the haunts of poverty and pain,  
Teach want to thrive, and grief to smile again ;  
To guide young footsteps to the right, and win  
The old in error from the ways of sin ;  
To ease the burthens of the human race,  
Mend ev'ry heart, and gladden ev'ry face,  
She liv'd and breath'd — not from the world  
                  estrang'd,  
But mov'd amongst it, guileless and unchang'd ;  
Still lov'd to view the picture's brighter side ;—  
The first to cherish, and the last to chide.

For this around the time-struck ruin wait  
Admiring crowds, the lowly and the great ;  
Thither for this the young, the good, repair,  
And watch, and tend, with unremitted care ;  
For this the orphans of the village bring  
Unbidden gifts, the earliest wreath of spring,  
Homage, that scarce encircles youth, or power,  
In court of kings, or beauty's vernal bower.

Thus cheer'd, yet thus forbid to labour more,  
Wanting herself the aid she gave before ;  
When feeble mortals peevishly complain,  
Regret past pleasures, and survive in vain ;  
She, like the silver lamp, that, night and day,  
Before some altar sheds its hallow'd ray,  
Serenely shines, in pure effulgence bright,  
With pious lustre, and attractive light ;  
Dispels the black'ning shades that gather round,  
And guides the wanderer to the sacred ground.

Servant of God ! thy task is nearly done !  
And soon, too soon, thy wages will be won.  
Yet how shall I contend with grief alone ?  
How bear this cheerless earth when thou art gone ?  
Dear being ! 'tis thyself would still bestow  
Whate'er of comfort the bereft may know !  
For when (how else shall I employ the hours ?)  
Of thee I think, thy virtues, and thy powers,  
Shall I despair ? thou didst not :—or repine ?  
Did ever murmur spring from lips of thine ?

Yes—I will strive—though, at the thought, my  
heart

Sickens, and Nature trembles at her part.

I will not wholly lose thee, but believe

That, from on high, thy care I still receive ;

And, as I wander through the silent glade,

Trace the sequester'd brook, or seek the shade,

Through day's long hours ; or in the night profound,

When stillness breathes a sacred calm around ;

Discourse with thee in spirit, though disjoin'd,

And catch the influence of angelic mind.

The force of virtue lasts beyond the grave,

Still shalt thou watch, console me, guide and save !

Lead me from ill, and keep my steadfast eye

Fix'd on the prospect of futurity ;

Where, soon or later—if I teach my feet

Thy steps to follow—we again shall meet\*.

---

\* The event, anticipated in the latter line of this Poem, took place a short time after it was written—in 1823.

DREAMS—1823.

---

I WAIT for night, and thus the day sustain.

Sleep is existence—dreams are paradise—  
For then the lost on earth are ours again.

*Her* then I see, and see without surprise,  
Or grief, forgetting Death's establish'd reign.

Nor think it strange she meets my gladden'd eyes,  
Nor deem another parting is so near.

And then we hold communion, sweet, sincere,

As when her sainted spirit dwelt below,  
And I was happier ev'ry passing year.

Ah! the maternal smile that tells me so!  
Words, void of sound, yet breathing peace and love,  
Steal from her lips—in heav'n I seem to move;  
Then wake—to life, reality and woe.

ON THE  
MONUMENT OF CECILIA METELLA.

---

Is this that Appian Way—so proud of yore,  
Proud of its trophies rear'd on either side—  
The street of tombs like palaces, that bore  
The titles of the mighty ; those who died  
For Rome, or living were their country's pride?  
What Rome believ'd eternal is no more ;  
Dust are the marble piles, the sacred fanes,  
And dark oblivion guards the voiceless plains.  
Yet, midst the wreck of grandeur, wealth, and power,  
A single tomb, a single name, remains,  
To soothe the wanderer in his thoughtful hour ;  
Untouch'd, unshaken, stands Cecilia's tower :—  
Rapine, and war, and time could all remove,  
All—but the record of domestic love !

ON THE  
APOLLO OF BELVIDERE.

---

How like a god art thou ! of mortal make,  
Yet more than mortal in thy step and mien ;  
Bloodless—yet breathing,—marble—yet awake !  
Conquest is on thy lip, yet hath it been  
A wreath that cost thee but the will to take.  
Oh ! bright perfection, here embodied seen !  
To look on thee is wisdom—virtue—all  
That sages taught in grove, or sculptur'd hall.  
For as we gaze, th' expanding soul takes flight,  
Soaring from earth to cloudless realms on high ;  
And, henceforth half ethereal, learns to slight  
The meaner things that catch the vulgar eye ;  
In lovelier objects only finds delight,  
All that is great, and pure, and beautiful, and right.

ON THE  
AMORINO OF THE VATICAN.

---

The Amorino is one of the most beautiful of Grecian statues, and, unlike the ordinary race of smirking Cupids, has a remarkably pensive expression of countenance.

---

IMMORTAL specimen of Grecian art,  
On thee for ever could I fix mine eyes,  
So much of breathing soul dost thou impart,  
And chain'st up all the body's faculties  
In the mind's rapture—not the idle smart  
Dost thou awake, that in a moment dies,  
But feeling, such as glow'd in Sappho's heart.  
No boy art thou of dimples, smiles, and lies,

As oft the poet sung, the painter drew ;  
But thought, akin to sadness, clouds thy prime,  
And speaks of passion deep, refin'd, and true,  
Passion uncheck'd by force, unchang'd by time.—  
All that is great is serious—this he knew  
Who made thee thus—and thus is love sublime.



THE YELLOW LEAF.

---

ROUND flew the bowl—the laugh rose high,  
While summer's richest canopy  
(The wedded boughs of emerald dye)  
Was all our shade.

So soft the air, so gay the plain,  
Though August's moon was in her wane.  
We said that summer's verdant reign  
Would never fade.

High rose the laugh, the transports swell;  
When sudden, potent as a spell,  
Detach'd by no rude Zephyr, fell  
One yellow leaf!

The mirth was hush'd ; the songster's lays  
Broke short, and each, in solemn gaze,  
Th' intruder mark'd, nor dar'd to raise  
Looks chang'd by grief ;

Each fear'd, upon the other's face,  
His own desponding thoughts to trace,  
As the pale emblem spoke the race  
Of summer spent.

It seem'd some Angel, from the skies,  
Had view'd our idle transports rise,  
And, pausing there, to make us wise,  
The warning sent—

To tell us that the scene might glow,  
But soon should lay its honours low,  
To tell us that our bliss should know  
A kindred end.

Yes—on that brightest, happiest day  
Reflection stole my smiles away,  
And as I dwelt, with mute survey,  
On each dear friend,

Methought, ere many a year goes round,  
Of us who revel on this ground,  
Few may, to meet again, be found,  
And sport anew;

The young before the old may go,  
And he, who bids this measure flow,  
May fall, perhaps, the first to shew  
His moral true.

## E P I T A P H

Written on the Death of Viscount Trafalgar, only son of William, Earl Nelson, who died Jan. 17, 1803, in the twentieth year of his age.

---

BRITON ! this verse may ask thy gen'rous tear,  
For Nelson's self had own'd his sorrows here.  
Here rests a youth. on whom reflected shone  
A nation's fondness for her hero gone.—  
Glory's adopted heir,—on whom repos'd  
His race new-honour'd, and with whom it clos'd :  
Summon'd at manhood's threshold, and on high  
By sudden fortune lifted, but to die—  
Unripe, by virtuous promise he made good  
His title to his mighty kinsman's blood ;  
And show'd Britannia's sons the way to fame  
With the proud trophy of Trafalgar's name.

THE END.







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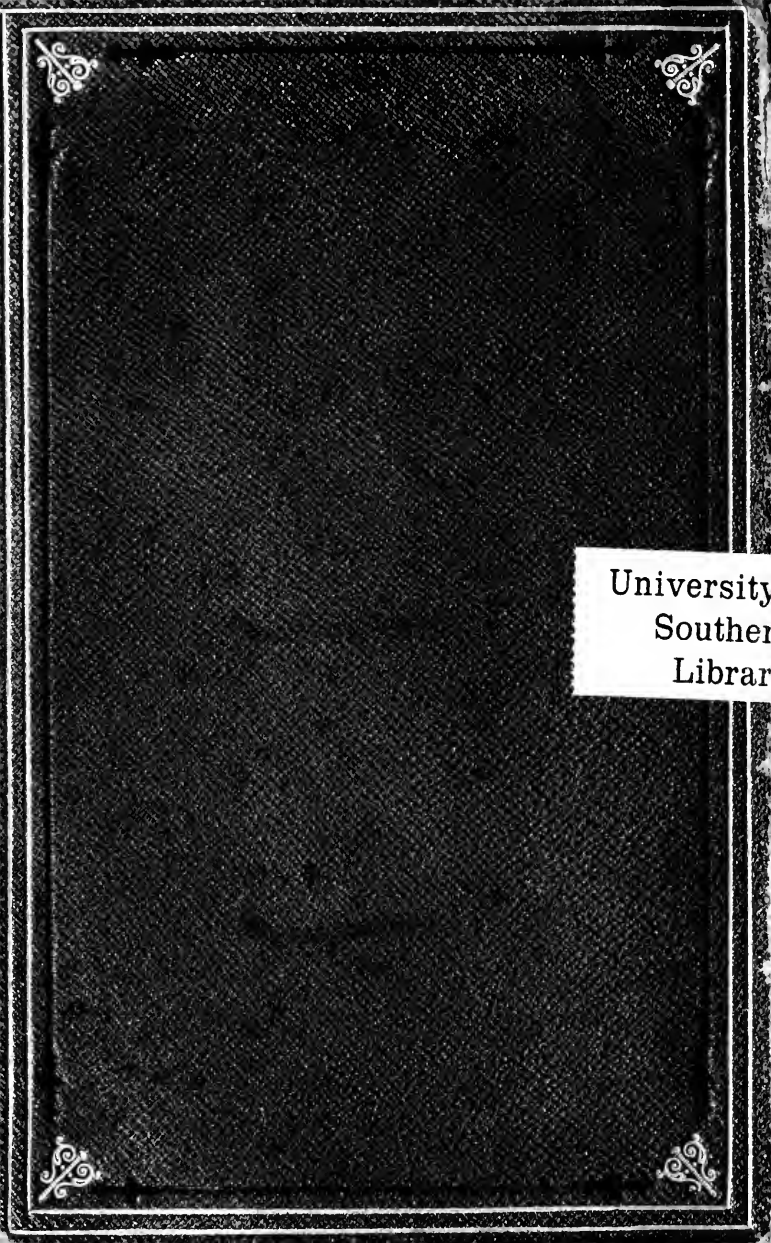
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